

THE PRIVACY AGENT

and other modest proposals by
BERNARD K. SANDWELL

The two dozen "pieces" in this book are all skits, treating with spirited though gentle raillery of such subjects as "The Deforestation of Canadian Poetry," "The Urgent Need for Superstitions," "I Sing the Bathroom," and so forth. Mr. Sandwell is well known in Canada and the United States of America equally as a leading academic light (including a Professorship of Economics at McGill University) and as a humorous writer, a duality of interests which automatically suggests Stephen Leacock, with whom Mr. Sandwell has long been associated, first as student, and later as colleague at McGill University. The book contains many illustrations in black-and-white by Arthur Lismer.

*The Privacy Agent
and other Modest
Proposals*

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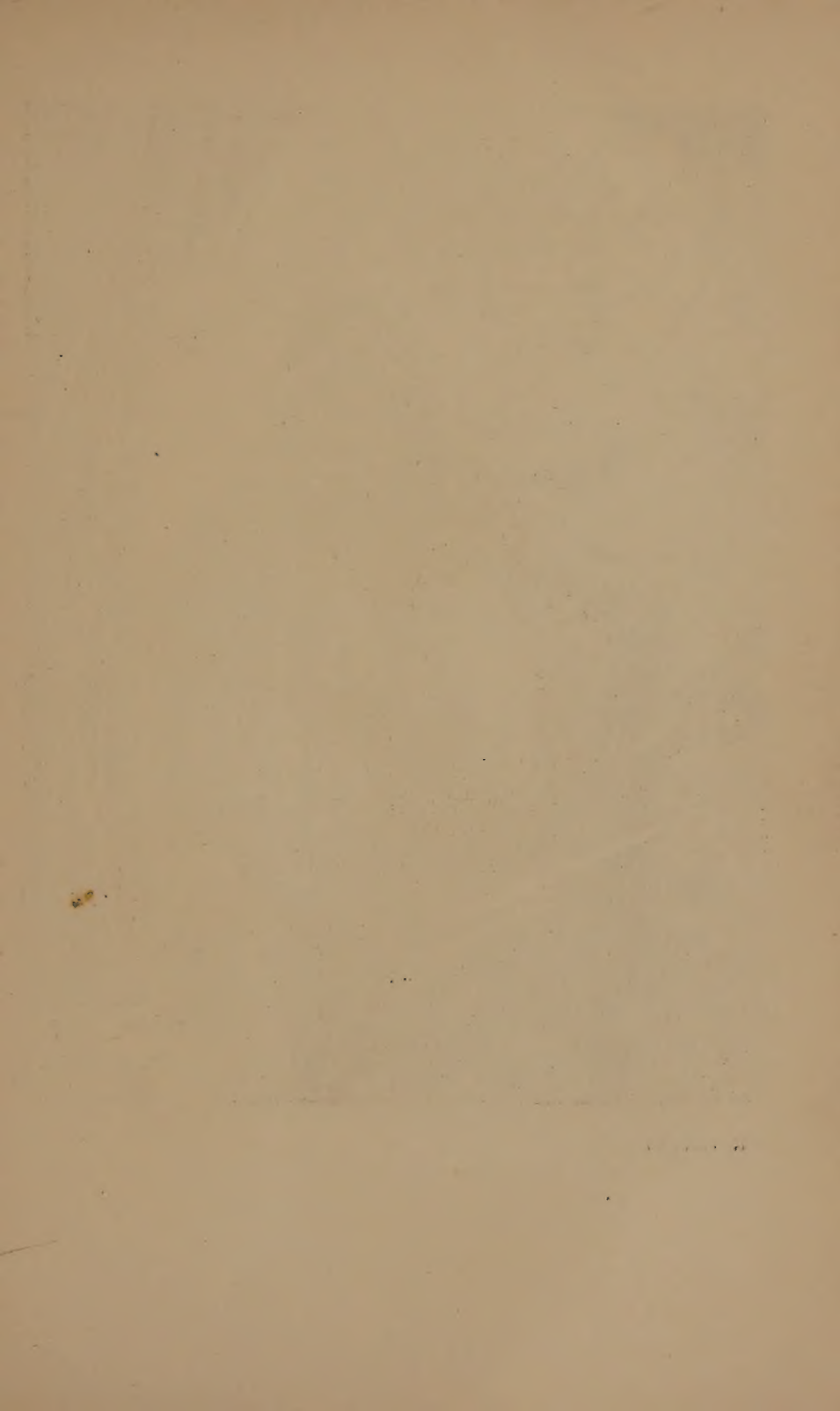
To Mrs C. W. King
179 Forest Hill Road

with the author's best
wishes

BK Landwell

June 4, 1944







PRIVACY

The Privacy Agent

and other Modest Proposals

by

B. K. Sandwell



Illustrated by A. Lismer

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FOUR WORDS

THE pieces in this volume are skits. Their object in life is to be skittish. If the reader does not find them so, either they are, or he is, no good. They are not studies in History, Economics, Relativity, Psycho-Analysis or Farm Management. If the reader wants my views on those subjects he will have to wait until I can do a book on them. I have done the skits first because they seemed to me to be more important.

Some of them have appeared in various Canadian periodicals, notably *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Toronto Saturday Night*, *Willison's Monthly*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *The Canadian Forum*, and *Canadian Forest and Outdoors*. To these I extend thanks for their hospitality and for their approval of my project to reprint them.

Careful readers of these pieces will discern that I consider the world to be susceptible of improvement. These pieces are, in fact, intended to improve it. I admit that their publication in the above-mentioned periodicals does not seem to have improved it much. In book form they will doubtless be more efficient. Go, little book, and make the world better.

B. K. S.

Montreal, December 1927.



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By A. LISMER

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THE PRIVACY AGENT

PRIVACY will be, obviously, the opposite of Publicity.

I say it will be, because I do not think the thing at present exists. I conceive myself to be inventing it, offering it to a sorely-tried world which, I earnestly hope, will hail it as at least meeting a long-felt want.

For Publicity, while an object of much human endeavour, is not surely that good-in-itself which is in all circumstances and at all times and in all places supremely good and infinitely to be desired. It is, for instance, possible to have too much of it. The Prince of Wales, for example, must at times feel—but if he does so feel, what can he do about it? At present, nothing. But with Privacy, much.

THE PRIVACY AGENT

(I think I shall dedicate the invention to him. To him in the British Empire, and to Mr. Henry Ford in the United States. And I am not sure that Mr. Ford will accept the dedication ; I am not sure that he suffers from publicity. I realise that inventors do not usually dedicate their inventions to anybody ; but authors used to, and I do not see why an inventor should not have as good a right to a patron as the writer of a book. There are many valueless inventions, true, but are there no valueless books ?)

Publicity is organised effort for the purpose of keeping some person or thing "public." It is the tenth Muse, the chief art of twentieth-century civilisation. Privacy will be simply the opposite—organised effort for the purpose of keeping some person or thing private. I think it will be a nobler, more subtle and more exquisite art. I am sure that in the long run it will minister more generously to human happiness.

The privacy agent will certainly have to be an infinitely more accomplished, more dexterous, more resourceful person than the publicity agent of the present day. The truly great publicity agent is the man who can persuade the public that it wants to hear about the person whom he is paid to serve. Once that is done, the newspapers and all the other channels through which publicity operates are powerless ; they cannot refuse to let the public have what it wants. It is not difficult to do for a short space of time, but it is terribly difficult to keep up for a lifetime ; which is why most publicity agents change their employers with much frequency. The privacy agent, if he is to succeed in the highest way, will have to teach the

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public that it does *not* want to hear anything about his client. And to do that, he will have to teach his client to behave in such a way that the public will not want to hear about him. That of course will sometimes be very difficult ; but in most cases where it is impossible the reason will be that the client does not really want privacy—he only thinks he does. No self-respecting privacy agent would ever “ take on ” Mr. Lloyd George, or the ex-Emperor William the Second of Germany ; as clients they would both be a joke.

There will be cases, also, when even the best organised campaign of privacy will result only in a moderate degree of quietude for its subject, not on account of any defects in himself, but because of the tremendous potentialities for publicity involved in some position in which he temporarily finds himself. To be respectable and moderately well-to-do and a trifle exclusive socially, and yet to be related to a person concerned in an interesting sex-angle murder—that is the kind of situation which will set almost any intelligent person looking in the telephone book for the names of the best privacy agents ; but it is also the kind of situation before which all but the most courageous and resourceful of the brotherhood would recoil in alarm and desperation. What *can* be done to keep such unfortunates out of the public eye ? Well, at present not much ; but the art is but in its infancy ; I have only just invented it ; I do not profess to have carried it to perfection. And even in this infantile stage of my new art, there are methods which present themselves to me as feasible and likely to result in at least a mitigation of the horrors of publicity.

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One of them—the best that I can think of at the moment, but also the most expensive—is to go out—I mean for the privacy agent to go out—and commit, or procure to be committed, an even better murder than that on which the public's eyes are presently fixed. It will be difficult, in many ways, but it can be done, and the great artist of privacy, like his brother and enemy, the great artist of publicity, will shrink at nothing to accomplish his end. The chief difficulty will be in the necessarily high quality of the second murder. The public is a far better judge of murders than of plays ; and those on which it fixes its hungry gaze and from which it refuses to be lured will assuredly be murders of genuine excellence and profound interest. To get a new murder done is not, I am confident, unreasonably difficult even in England ; in Chicago it is merely a matter of a telephone call and a fifty-dollar bill. But a *good* murder is another thing. That requires imagination, a touch perhaps of genius, and a suspicion of art-for-art's-sake contempt for consequences. But all that, surely, has no effect except to make my new art more alluring to the ablest and most daring minds. I am confident that before Privacy has been a recognised art for twelve months, half the best intellects in the Publicity business will have crossed the street to set up in the new profession.

By that time every millionaire will consider a privacy agent an essential part of his household—even if there is a publicity agent to sit on the opposite side of the same table. For one of the most appalling consequences of wealth (and they are many, I am told), especially in countries where there are not many

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other differences between the inhabitants, is that it subjects not only its acquirer but all the members of his family to a pitiless amount of exposure to the public eye. The acquirer is usually a fairly thick-skinned person and can stand it, and may even profit by it if he be still engaged in the business of acquiring ; but his wife and the younger generation are entitled to such protection as the skilled privacy agent can afford them.

The methods employed by this permanent family retainer must not be crude ; but if they were he would not be an artist, and I hope I have made it clear that Privacy is an art. Already, indeed, a few members of wealthy families have shown an inkling of the idea that Privacy is needed, and have attempted to practise it themselves, but always in the most primitive and amateurish fashion. I recall the case of one admirable lady in the Dominion of Canada who, imbued with the correct idea that something ought to be done to protect her family from the ravages of the press photographers, adopted the preposterous method of dashing at their appliances with a large cane. Needless to say, the results were the precise opposite of what she desired. She will, I am sure, be one of the first persons to engage the services of a graduate of the great international College of Privacy which I propose to found as soon as I have decided what university it should be attached to. (The claims of Oxford appear very great ; but I believe that there are educational institutions of an even more privacious character upon the tops of certain inaccessible mountains in Tibet.)

There are, of course, a considerable number of

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persons in the world who would much like to enjoy the services of privacy, but are not entitled to do so. The professional criminal, for example, needs privacy in his business, at least at certain stages ; during his trial and his subsequent efforts to evade the execution of his sentence, he may perhaps find publicity more useful. But the operations of the criminal have a slightly anti-social character, and I am not sure that the vows of the Brotherhood of Privacy will allow its members to offer him their services. It is well known that publicity agents never extend the benefits of their craft to anybody who is not fully and legitimately entitled to them, and I do not think that the practitioners of privacy can afford to fall behind in the loftiness of their ideals and the severity of their rules of conduct.

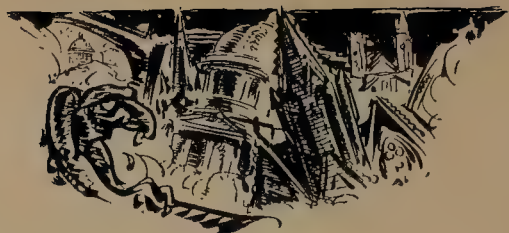
There is one radical difference between publicity and privacy, which on the whole seems to me to be strongly in favour of the younger art. Publicity is a necessity ; privacy is a luxury. Publicity pays for itself, or it is no good and nobody wants it ; privacy will have to be paid for by those who seek to enjoy its benefits. Eventually there may come to be charitable foundations for the purpose of providing privacy for deserving persons who are in urgent need of it and cannot afford to pay the price. Even before that day comes, I have no doubt that eminent practitioners, in receipt of an ample salary from some millionaire client, will spare a portion of their time and talents for the relief of destitute cases, just as medical practitioners are understood to do now. But taking it by and large, privacy will be an appanage of the well-to-do (who indeed need it more than

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almost anybody else), and will be paid for by them like their domestic services, their art and their religion.

But the main thing in its favour, as an art, is that it is going to be so terribly difficult. All the tendencies of the age are against it. The privacy artist must fight his way up the stream, while the publicity agent paddles easily down it, looking as if he was making twelve miles an hour and actually by his own exertions making about two.





COLLECTING CATHEDRALS

THE first duty of a millionaire is to collect something ; I mean, of course, something other than those stocks, shares, bonds, mortgages, and other titles, the accumulation of which erected him into a millionaire. A collection of something—something fairly expensive and completely useless to its owner—is the first and best certificate of millionaireshood regarded not as a mere economic condition but as a social rank. It is far better than membership in any club, for nobody has yet dared to found a club into which millionaires alone should be admitted ; they would bore one another too terribly. The commencement of a collection is, therefore, the best possible form of declaration that the new millionaire proposes to live in accordance with the rules of his caste. It is an acceptance of the duties of his position. It is his solemn vow to walk humbly among his fellow-millionaires and to be and act in all things precisely like unto the rest of them. There ought to be some sort of ceremonial about it, like the mediæval admission to knighthood. A chorus of older millionaires should intone something, and a little incense would be helpful. The oldest millionaire present would inform the neophyte in impressive tones that it is his bounden duty to pursue con-

COLLECTING CATHEDRALS

sistently the glorious goal of possessing the largest collection in the world of whatever he may happen to be collecting, and that he may neither rest nor falter until this object has been accomplished.

There are undoubtedly a great many millionaires who do not know what to collect. There may even be some who do not know that it is necessary to collect anything, except Scotch whisky and motor-cars. But that implies an abnormally low level of intelligence, even for a millionaire. This article is not for such as they. This article is for those who have honestly faced the problem of what to collect and have not arrived at any satisfactory solution. To them my heart goes out. I am prepared not only to tell them what to collect but even to collect it for them, on a cost-plus basis or on straight salary.

First let me say that there is no need for despair. In spite of the thousands of millionaires who are collecting things already, there are still plenty of things left to collect. There is, of course, no absolute rule against collecting the things that somebody else is already collecting ; but to do so shows a lack of originality of which no really self-respecting millionaire should be guilty. Besides, it is extremely difficult to get the " largest and best collection in the world " if somebody else has started in already and accumulated a lot of the things that one is proposing to collect. It is also true that competing collectors tend to push prices up on one another, but I do not put that forward as an objection to competition. Competition is an excellent thing. In fact it is difficult to convince the world that a collection is worth anything unless somebody else is after the same things. But my point still holds good. Be the first to collect whatever you

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propose to collect, but pick something that other people are sure to want to collect after they have seen you collecting it. Then you get the prestige of leading the procession, and in addition you get the first instalment of your collection cheap.

What are the chief requisites for a really first-class collectible article? I have given to this question the study of a lifetime which has been largely devoted to helping millionaires to spend their money, and I think I can speak with some authority.

(1) The prime requisite, lacking which all other excellences are as dross and a tinkling cymbal, is that the collection must be one which a university or museum can be induced to accept when the owner is through with it. I have known millionaires who had actually to found a new university of their own in order to have an institution which would accept their treasures. This is terribly expensive and just a tiny bit undignified. The tragic case of Blenkinsopp College, founded for the sole purpose of accepting the bequest of the great Blenkinsopp Collection of turned-wood overmantels and archway-grilles of the McKinley period, will be familiar to most of my readers. The collection was unique in its enormity, not to say enormous in its iniquity, but somehow or other it failed to strike a responsive chord in the breasts of the university presidents and museum curators of America, and it would have been dispersed to the four winds if its owner had not disinherited his widow and orphans in order to endow an institution that could not refuse to look after it. The Bumpus Collection of Early Twentieth Century Motor-Car Fenders was another case in point. The collection

COLLECTING CATHEDRALS

therefore must be something that can reasonably be described as having an educational value. This is not so severe a limitation as might be supposed. I hear that a Southern university recently accepted a princely gift of six hundred Pharaonic chariot-wheels fished out of the Red Sea ; and negotiations are now proceeding whereby the English Department of a leading New England college will shortly accept from Mr. Carl Van Vechten a set of seven hundred safety-razor blades once used by Mr. Arthur Machen. It is true that in the case of the razor blades the problem of housing is unusually simple. But some sort of educational value may usually be found even in the most unlikely objects, if only they are scarce and the collection approaches completeness. Yale, it is true, declined a collection of over a million uncashed betting-slips, compiled at huge expense by one of its most popular younger alumni ; but it must be admitted that betting-slips are not rare, and that even a million, all different, does not come anywhere near being the total number of such documents issued to the backers of unplaced horses since racing began in the United States. Seven universities, on the other hand, are competing for the honour of housing the superb collection of cocktail shakers, ranging from the earliest days to the present time, which is now in the hands of the Hoggenheimers of West Virginia.

(2) The second requisite is that the collection must consist of something that a good press-agent can induce the public to talk about, and that without too much trouble and expenditure. One of the errors of my early career was in inducing the late Henry

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Halliburton to collect hymn-books—just hymn-books, *tout court*, without qualification. We accumulated—I say we, for Henry provided nothing but the money, but in that he was lavish beyond praise!—we accumulated by far the largest hymn-book collection in the world, and had every theological librarian of two continents sitting open-mouthed on our doorstep. But we never could get up the slightest public interest in it. The public was off hymn-books, or so it appeared. Halliburton received eleven honorary D.D. degrees, and was beginning to talk of sticking out for D.Litts. But in the newspapers we could never get more than half a column on an inside page.

There is no fun in collecting things that nobody pays any attention to. Halliburton was beginning to get despondent, and rival collectors with more popular subjects were poking fun at him, when I had a happy thought. I persuaded him to cast out all the hymn-books except those which contained at least a few fairly lurid and spicy hymns on the subject of Hell. We literally threw the Hell-less hymn-books to the librarians on the doorstep, and we reduced the collection from thirty-seven thousand volumes to a trifle over twelve thousand. But the Rump collection became famous in a week. “Halliburton’s Hymns of Hell” were the chief topic in the Sunday newspapers during the summer of 192—, and we got out a book containing the best three hundred of the hymns and a little historical sketch of the subject (which Halliburton signed) and sold half a million copies. The collection, as everybody knows, is now the chief glory of the library of the Jones Institute of Thermo-Dynamic Technology.

COLLECTING CATHEDRALS

The best means of ensuring public interest is to make your collection consist of things which have either a strong tinge of sentiment or a faint tinge of impropriety. About the latter there is a certain risk. The limits of impropriety change with such rapidity that there is a chance that the collection which began by being quite definitely improper in 1920 may find itself hopelessly Comstockian by 1930 ; and collecting is necessarily a slow and enduring process. On the other hand, any excess of impropriety is sure to lead to trouble with the universities and museums. An excellent collection of garters formerly belonging to ladies of the Opera Comique in Paris, begun by an Indian potentate but largely supplemented by the researches of an American industrialist, is still looking for a permanent home.

The field on the sentimental side is very large and much safer. Almost any class of objects relating to Mary Queen of Scots, Mary of Argyle, Mary of the Lamb, and Mary Pickford is instantly acceptable. The only trouble is that almost everything relating to those ladies has already been collected. Failing the great sentimental heroines, one may fall back on the great flags and their inventors, the great patriotic songs and their writers, the great amorists and their lady friends. Bobby Burns was one of the earliest and most perfect of "collectibles" ; a complete collection of his plows is now probably unattainable, but if it could be had it would represent the high-water mark of collecting ambition. But the Burnsiana have been mostly rounded up. The collector must move on to somebody else ; and in an age when Casanova has become a proper subject of dinner-table

COLLECTING CATHEDRALS

conversation what better successor could present himself? But I must not particularise too extensively in these suggestions, or I shall be damaging my own business.

(3) A third important requisite is that the collection must be entirely dignified, must have no ludicrous aspect, either in itself or in conjunction with the personality of its collector. It may be suggested that this rule would exclude the garters to which I have referred above ; but I do not think that was the real objection to them. After all, the garter is an ornamental, and now an entirely reputable, part of the female attire, as well as being the insignia of an exclusive British order and a thing about which we are told (in French) to think no evil. It is not in itself undignified ; but it should not be collected by a millionaire who made his pile in, let us say, silk stockings or elastic webbing. A collection of the pickle-forks of all ages would be admirable for almost anybody, but not for a scion of the house of Heinz ; the world would ask how many varieties he had. Mr. Ford naturally avoids collecting anything relating to Saint (or Queen) Elizabeth, or the Phœnician tin trade. The du Pont family do not go in for busts, nor the Wrigleys for Indian spear-heads.

* * * *

One has ideas at times that are too good for any practical and present use. I have had one such idea in connection with millionaires and their collecting. It is so vast in its range, so noble in its proportions, so classic in its outline and so romantic in its emotional appeal, that I have no hope of seeing it acted upon



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under my guidance or even in my lifetime, and I set it down here as my chief gift to millionaire posterity. Some day somebody will put it into execution. It may be that he will render appropriate tribute to me as its inventor ; it may be that he will not. But I shall be far beyond caring for such small matters, and here in this little article will be imbedded, for the eye of the historian, my indefeasible claim to its paternity. I suggest as a proper task for a very great, very rich, very imaginative, very enterprising, and very persistent American millionaire—

A collection of European churches dedicated to one or other or both of the two most popular (in dedications) European saints, St. Peter and St. Paul. This collection to be bought up, demolished, transported across the Atlantic, and re-erected in some suitable area in the United States, all together so that they can conveniently be examined and studied without the nuisance of having to run all over a continent. (They must be “assembled,” or they might just as well be left in Europe ; and if they are not assembled how can we say that they have been collected ?) It will probably be necessary to begin with the smaller and less famous examples, which will be brought over as acquired, an ample edifice by a good modern architect being substituted at the cost of the collector if the owners of the original church express a desire for it—which they will not always do. A large space of ground, preferably in the Prairie States where the land is flat, will be acquired, enough to hold eighty or a hundred churches and half a score of cathedrals. On this space the acquired churches will be re-erected as they arrive, under the supervision of a good land-

COLLECTING CATHEDRALS

scape architect, the finest sites being reserved for the last and most difficult acquisitions. When assembled, these edifices will serve admirably all the purposes of a university and a group of museums and laboratories ; their architectural diversity is not likely to be much greater than that of any other group of university buildings on the Continent.

By the time our billionaire has acquired fifty or sixty good English, French and German churches dedicated to St. Paul, the people of London will be becoming used to the idea ; indeed it will become their obvious duty to permit him to complete his collection by acquiring their city cathedral to top off with. The purchase will then resolve itself into nothing more than a matter of terms, in the discussion of which it will be pointed out that the place is second-hand anyhow and is on the point of falling down, and will be much better preserved in the dry clear air of Minnesota or California. If the Bishop, or the Dean and Chapter, or whoever owns the cathedral, should prove extortionate, no doubt Mr. Hoover could be induced to take an interest in the matter and bring diplomatic pressure to bear. It is a well-recognised principle of international law that no foreigner has a right to refuse to sell to an American anything that the American wants and can pay for. Meanwhile a Much Bigger and Better St. Paul's will be provided for the Londoners from designs by one of the best of the New York skyscraper artists, with direct communications with the subway, and an office for the Dean in the top storey.

Unless our billionaire decides to collect Deans, too.

I SING THE BATHROOM

I SING the bathroom !

No, idiot ! Not " I sing in the bathroom ! " Everybody does that. It is a scientific phenomenon, one of the most interesting of our modern age. The bath acts as a resonator, and improves one's voice so much that the temptation to exercise it is absolutely irresistible. Unfortunately the improved resonation is perceptible only to a hearer who is also in the bath ; and as bathing is by tradition a more or less solitary amusement, it follows that the bather himself is the only person who hears his voice in its magnified and enriched condition. Whence it frequently occurs that the vocal bather is surprised and hurt at the lack of appreciation which he finds in listeners outside of the bathroom. To myself in my bath listening, I in my bath singing sound like Chaliapin ; to my wife outside in the corridor I sound just like what I always sound like when singing. . . . Not, then, " I sing in the bathroom ! " That would be a platitude, a truism, a proper subject for an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*. . . . Memo, to write an article for the *Atlantic Monthly* on Singing in the Bathroom. Excuse me while I jot it down. . . . But for the present, " I sing the bathroom ! " That's the way to begin a mock-heroic poem ; why not also to begin a mock-heroic prose essay ? " Sing," of course, is not to be

I SING THE BATHROOM

taken literally. It merely means, as it did in Homer, Virgil, Milton, and Dr. Watts, "to throw a fit." This is a fit about the bathroom.

I sing the bathroom !

The twentieth century is the bathroom's century. True, the bathroom shares that century with the Dominion of Canada ; but now that we have experienced nearly thirty years out of the hundred, I feel that Canada can well afford to let the bathroom have what is left. It is a poor century, and we might better have taken a chance on one about five hundred years from now. However, the twentieth century, like the National Railway deficit, the tariff, the Maple Leaf for Ever, the climate, and the Ontario Parliament Buildings, was wished on us by our ancestors, and I suppose we shall have to see them all through. Let us say, then, that the twentieth century is the century of Canada and of the bathroom.

It is my aim and object, in this prose Ode to the noblest creation of the mind of man, to suggest that we are entering upon a new era of civilisation, of which the bathroom is to be the central fact, the keynote, the cornerstone and the quintessential expression. Every successive civilisation is marked by the predominance of some one feature of the human habitation. In the nomad age the habitation itself, the tent, having no parts and precious little magnitude, was the type and embodiment of the age. Many centuries later, after the establishment of the permanent home, the hearth or fireplace became the significant thing, the object of reverence, the symbol of domesticity. With the advent of stoves, and still more of central heating, the hearth was driven from

I SING THE BATHROOM

its place of honour, and indeed largely abolished, and the Great North American Parlour became the sacred portion of the house. Almost synchronous, almost synonymous with the Victorian Age in England, the Parlour Age in North America began to draw to its close about 1900, and it is possible that there are among my younger readers to-day some who have never seen a real Parlour in all its glory. Its history will some day be written by a more eloquent pen than mine. It is now definitely gone ; the Parlour Age is over, and its successor, the Bathroom Age, is upon us. Let us examine some of its characteristics and tendencies.

* * * *

In the nineteenth century, the Parlour Age, of which I am a native, the bathroom was a shamefaced apartment which we all conspired to treat as if it did not exist. Strong men, to whose cheek the word "cuspidor" brought no flush of red, choked over the word "bathroom" in mixed polite society. If the sound of escaping water gurgling down the waste-pipe happened to penetrate to the parlour, mamma asked little Willie to play his noisiest piece on the piano. If the ladies of the Euchre Club were going to be asked upstairs to lay their outer garments on the guest-room bed, little Mary was sent up ahead of the first batch to make sure that the bathroom door was tightly closed. And the nineteenth-century bathroom had some qualities which went far to justify our reticence. It frequently had no windows, owing to the conviction of architects that nobody could possibly want to look out of a window while

I SING THE BATHROOM

taking a bath. It had too many wooden partitions, and they were too decayed. The enamel used on the tub itself (if it were enamel and not merely paint) was of a kind that easily became discouraged and discoloured. The walls were usually tinted a sickly blue or a dirty grey. All the half-finished patent-medicine bottles (and it was a patent-medicine age) were stacked along the shelves and on the linoleum-covered table. The washbowl was cracked, the taps were rusted, and dissolute tooth-brushes lay here and there like flotsam and jetsam after a storm. The retirement age for tooth-brushes was much higher than at present, and veterans of five or seven years' service paraded their scars like the beggars in the Piazza di San Marco in Ruskin's pretty little tale. Altogether it was a detrimental place, and when showing off the house to visitors we passed this one door with a half-breathed mention of its name, and the guest understood and looked obligingly in another direction, as he would if one had said, in the same deprecatory tones, "This is the family skeleton cupboard !"

How changed is all this to-day ! The bathroom is now the chief show place of the domicile, the *chef d'œuvre* of its creator. It competes with the radio installation and the heated garage for the place of honour as "Exhibit A" in the catalogue of the home's glories, the position once occupied by the dim and closely-curtained "parlour" with the "upright grand" and the stuffed birds and the horsehair sofa and the Brussels carpet. It is the best room (or more correctly they are the best rooms) in the best homes of the best people. The most fashionable modern

I SING THE BATHROOM

apartments are two or three palatial bathrooms with little bedrooms grouped round them in which one may sleep off the effects of the bath. The other rooms have atrophied, as they say in the biology books ; the dining-room is not needed because it is so much nicer to eat at the Club ; the drawing-room is a useless waste because the young people now prefer to dance at the Ritzdorf ; the library disappeared a generation or more ago when people found that it was easier and cheaper to borrow books from the public library than to buy them. The only things that people do at home now with any regularity are sleep and bathe, and for that matter most of them don't sleep indoors—they prefer to do it out on the veranda ! The bathrooms will soon be all that is left of the individual human home.

* * * *

The movie producers, who are the most profound students of the tendencies of our contemporary life, have long since discovered this fact. When they want to establish the idea that the hero or heroine is a person of real wealth and exquisite sensibility, they do not show us the drawing-room or the dining-room or still less the library. If we see the chief personages of the drama dining it is almost certain to be in the Grand Babylon Hotel ; if we see them dancing it is on the roof of that same magnificent hostelry. But they go home to bathe, and we see them do it. Not a high-life film have I seen in the last six months but the reckless and noble-hearted young clubman took a bath on his return home from the Patricians Club, and telephoned while in the bath to the daring and

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chaperon-scorning daughter of the puritanical old railway magnate ; and she responded to him from out the decently clouded depths of a magnificent marble pool filled with scented water and surrounded by gigantic sponges and assiduous lady's-maids. Breakfast, or supper, is often served to these fastidious personages while immersed in their ablutionary element. The morning's mail is brought in, carefully slit open by the attendant, and perused and sorted by the principal, the bills being dropped in the bath (where they must certainly impede the waste-pipe), and the *billets-doux* filed in a special soap-container well above the water-level. The current stock-market quotations—for these baths do not take place before ten in the morning—are flashed upon a screen at the foot of the bath, where the placid ablutionist can contemplate them without physical exertion if not always without disturbance of mind. In short, the modern movie bather does everything except stand up.

All this leads me to believe that the social possibilities of the new bathroom have as yet been merely hinted at. The discovery that bath-water need not necessarily be translucent converts a properly filled and clouded bath into the equivalent of a suit of clothes. Provided only that the act of entering and leaving the bath (like that of entering or leaving any other suit of clothes) be performed in adequate privacy, there is no reason why the process of occupying it should not be as public, as social, and as formal and dignified as any other process of ordinary life. I look forward to a time when the chief or "state" bathroom of the mansion will be the scene of all the chief functions of



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the residence. It will have twin baths, in which the host and hostess, reclining at their warm and fluid ease, will extend their morning greetings to the various guests, who having breakfasted in their own baths will file in, clad in princely kimonos and redolent of bath salts. A hand or two of bridge may be played. A portable screen will then enable the hostess to withdraw to take her reducing massage in another room; and the host will then hold consultations with his butler, his bootlegger, his pet clergyman (if any), his broker and his income-tax accountant. Ordinary friends and relatives will be admitted later, in order of precedence. In the meantime the younger members of the household can be holding similar levees in their own private "salons de bain." It is no longer fashionable for the entire household to assemble together for any purpose whatever, to say nothing of morning prayers; but if this practice should ever be revived I would suggest that the assembly be held in the grand swimming pool, that the religious exercises be performed by radio, and that they be followed by a general exhibition of plain and fancy diving by household and visitors.

* * * *

One thing that is absolutely necessary if the bathroom is to be raised to its proper dignity is a change in its name. But this presents no difficulties whatever on a continent which has invented such admirable euphemisms as "mortician," "cuspidor" and "B.V.D.'s"! The imposing word "aquarium" has unfortunately acquired an accidental association with fish, and has the further disadvantage of being

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perfectly good Latin. A new euphemism on this continent should if possible be formed in such a way as to violate all the principles of classical derivation. "Thermae," the correct Latin name for baths, is too short, but "thermidorium" ought to do nicely. If the bath manufacturers only knew their business the social columns will soon be filled with such items as the following :

"The palatial marble and onyx thermidorium of Mrs. Hollinger Jones was yesterday the scene of one of the most charming receptions of the season. Mrs. Jones was in deep purple water with cream-coloured soap, and wore purple asters in her hair. All the baths were occupied, and four tables of bridge were played. Many exquisite bath-robcs were noticed as the guests arrived." And also :

"The Hon. John Paul Marat, head of the great slaughterhouse corporation of Danton, Marat & Co., was murdered in his magnificent thermidorium at noon to-day by a young woman giving the name of Charlotte Corday, who secured admittance by representing herself as the agent for a new brand of bath soap. She is thought to be insane."



THE URGENT NEED FOR SUPERSTITIONS

ONE of the things that a country like Canada needs is a whole lot more superstition. We need it in our business.

Superstition, except little things like the three cigarettes from one match idiocy, has not been really fashionable in this country since Confederation. In fact, it takes quite a lot of courage, in this year of the Georgian era and of the King administration, to stand up and emit a demand for more of it. But I am nothing if not courageous—that is, when writing pieces for the papers.

We have an entirely wrong idea about superstitions, having been brought up for a century or two to think that they are all bad. Whereas the fact is that there are good superstitions and bad superstitions, and most superstitions are good when they are young and bad when they get ancient and ready to die off. A great many superstitions have died off in Canada in the last fifty or sixty years, and doubtless they were mostly bad or they would not have died off so easily. But it really is high time we got a few new ones. Perhaps it would not be necessary to call them superstitions, but that is what they would be just the same.

All primitive races have a splendid collection of

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superstitions, which is one of the reasons why we think that we are so superior to the primitive races. But in real truth most of these superstitions are of the highest value for the conservation and proper development of the natural resources upon which the primitive tribe happens to depend.

We, who are not primitive persons, imagine that we have an enormous advantage over all primitive persons in that we know all about Conservation and Development, and spell both of them with a capital letter. We are convinced that Conservation and Development are things which should be attended to by government departments ; it is just possible that that is a superstition in itself, and not a particularly good one.

But the primitive person, without having the slightest idea that he is doing so, practises Conservation and Development under the guise of superstition ; and because he pays far more attention to his superstitions than we do to our government departments and our scientific rules for promoting Conservation and Development, he practises them much better. The heathen in his blindness does indeed, as the nineteenth-century hymn used to tell us, bow down to wood and stone ; but the question presents itself, whether he can really be so terribly blind, if while bowing he is so very careful to preserve the wood or whatever else it may be upon which the economic life of his tribe depends.

In all parts of the world, primitive tribes which live upon flocks and herds and would starve without them entertain all sorts of preposterous superstitions about herds and flocks. The animals which are herded or



THE HEATHEN IN HIS BLINDNESS BOWS DOWN
TO WOOD AND STONE

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flocked, as the case may be, are almost universally regarded as sacred. That, of course, is absurd. We, being intelligent and not primitive persons, know that a sheep cannot possibly be sacred, even though it be the sole source of livelihood for oneself, one's family and one's entire tribe or nation, and that a cow, however indispensable, is nothing in the world but a ruminant quadruped of the bovine species with lacteal habits. But the poor deluded pastoral tribesman, being convinced that these animals are sacred, never slaughters any of them except under the most abnormal circumstances, and contents himself with subsisting on the milk and other by-products and on game. This is not because he has studied the statistics of the sheep or cow population, the rate of natural growth and depletion, and the prospective needs of his tribe for the next forty or eighty years ; he has not studied anything of the kind, and there is every reason to suppose that if he had, it would make no more impression on him than it does on us. It is merely because he is afraid that if he killed a sheep the wrath of the sheep deity would fall upon him and his family for several generations. But the result is just as good, if not better.

For while it is impossible not to shed a tear over the deluded ignorance of the poor pastoral primitive tribesman bowing down to a sacred object which has four legs and horns and a coat of wool, or reverencing a deity whose utterances are confined to " Moo ! " the fact remains that this degrading superstition is extremely good for the economic life and progress of the tribe to which he belongs. It enables it to accumulate capital, to build up a reserve against the

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seven lean years. We intelligent, progressive and non-primitive persons do not need this particular superstition as an incentive to thrift, because we have our own pet superstition, that it is a good thing to be a millionaire. But our superstition only teaches us to be thrifty when it is to our own personal advantage to be thrifty, whereas the superstition of the primitive person teaches him to be thrifty in the interests of the tribe and the community as a whole.

In precisely the same way the primitive people of Northern Europe, who had to get their living in forest-clad countries, speedily developed a large and vigorous set of superstitions about the forests and the things that were in them—superstitions which were simply splendid for conservation purposes; and thousands of miles away from them our friend and predecessor, the noble red man of North America, did precisely the same thing in precisely the same circumstances. Like those of the pastoral tribes, practically all of these forestal superstitions tended to the preservation and encouragement of the things upon which the tribe depended for its sustenance and safety, namely, the forest and the wild creatures to which it afforded a home.

Anthropologists, who pursue superstitions (other people's superstitions) as pigs do truffles, have dug up enormous quantities of them all over the world, and have come to the conclusion that practically all primitive superstitions (or primitive religions, if you prefer to call them so) had the effect, in the circumstances in which they originally grew up, of promoting the maintenance or increase of the economic basis of the tribe—its source of living—or else its military

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security—its defence against enemies—or its physical health. In other words, in the time and place and circumstances in which they grew up they were a mighty good, not to say an indispensable, thing. But superstitions, like many other things, occasionally outlive their usefulness. In places they hang on too long. The superstitions which were denounced in the nineteenth-century hymns, as noted above, were probably for the most part superstitions which had lasted beyond their time and were a bit decayed. The cow, for example, is highly revered in India, and the inhabitants of that slightly over-populated area will not eat it ; but the reverencing of the cow is a pastoral superstition, and India, which was once pastoral, has for a good many centuries been much too thickly populated for a proper pastoral life. It is difficult to resist the conviction that India would now get along better if the cow had less sanctity.

Thus we see that a superstition, when young and strong and growing in its proper surroundings, has its meritorious side, no matter how reprehensible it may become when old and decayed, and when the circumstances which gave rise to it have ceased to exist. The beautiful thing about a superstition, as compared at any rate with the rules and regulations and inspections with which we seek to effect the same objects, is that it enforces itself. No policeman, no forest ranger, no inspector of the herds, is necessary ; for the policeman and the ranger are in the soul of the man who has the superstition. He cannot escape from them. We, who have nothing but rules and regulations, naturally feel ourselves at liberty to break them whenever it looks as if we could get away

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with it—that is to say, whenever the policeman is not around. But primitive man knew that he could never get away with it. His gods, or his devils, or whatever you like to call them, were always attending to business, and their business was to see that he acted up to the best lights of his superstitions. So he usually did.

A few well-planted superstitions would be of priceless value in Canada at the present time. Consider what a country it would be, if every automobilist had a superstition that it was unlucky to travel at more than twenty-five miles an hour in a busy thoroughfare. Or if every mining promoter had a superstition that it was unlucky to sell shares in any mine unless he himself was firmly convinced that it was just as good as he represented it to be. Or if every farmer had a superstition that it was unlucky to take more energy out of the soil than he could replace in it. Or if everybody who had anything to do with the forests had a superstition that it was unlucky to do anything that would involve the slightest risk of their destruction or of the loss of any part of their value or vigour or beauty.

Yes, we could do with a few superstitions. It is too bad that we have become much too reasonable to have any.



THE B. A. FILLING STATION

I AM going down to New York next month to tell the Rockefeller Foundation how higher education ought to be sold on this progressive North American continent. The present methods are mediaeval. I am aware that the college industry *seems* to be growing, but at what a paltry rate ! I do not suppose the annual crop of graduates increases faster than two per cent. per annum, while the sugar consumption goes up five per cent., the rubber consumption twelve, and the moving picture expenditure twenty-seven. If we don't do better than this we shall soon be turning out more bootleggers than bachelors of arts.

It is all due to defective salesmanship. The article the college sells is all right ; it is just about what the public wants. It is a nice standardised product, all parts interchangeable, a child can use it, there is nothing to get out of order, it requires no attention after purchase, and it pays for itself in five years. It is comfortable ; in fact, you hardly know you have one, and women take to it as readily as men. There is as yet no successful substitute for it, and no competitive product. If the steamship lines had brains enough to grant a diploma to anybody who spent two or three years running round the world, I suspect they could get away quite a bit of the university business (John Smith, L.C.P., F.H.A.L., would sound

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rather good—Licentiate of the Canadian Pacific, Fellow of the Hamburg American Line) ; but they won't do that for a few years yet. So it isn't the goods that are wrong ; it is the method of marketing them.

It is universally recognised that this is the age of the consumer. He can sit tight while the producer hustles round and tries to sell him things. But the universities are still sitting tight and demanding that the consumer come to them. Why should a college insist that the purchaser of education come to a certain definite place and spend a certain definite time getting it ? There is no reason, except that they did it in Bologna in 1500 and in Oxford in 1600. And here we are in North America in 1926 ! If I want cheese I do not have to go to a cheese factory ; I telephone the grocer and he sends it up. If I want religion I do not have to go to church ; I tune in my radio set and get two sets of prayers and sermon every Sunday. If I want an automobile—but I do not even have to want one ; if I have money enough to buy one, a score of agents will camp on my doorstep and teach me to want the kind they have to sell. But with education it is not so. The only people who are doing anything to “sell” education are the football players. They are doing noble work, especially when we consider how few samples they carry. But they can't do it all.

What is needed, as I propose to tell the Rockefeller Foundation, is first of all a merger of all the universities and colleges on the continent into one vast University of North America, of which the existing institutions will be branches. This should present very little

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trouble. The saving in operating costs alone will be something inconceivable, something fantastic. Uniform textbooks all over the continent; a single examination paper in each course to be written by students from Maine to California and Prince Albert to Tia Juana; centralised manufacture of gowns, hoods, diplomas and football togs; uniform architecture for all future buildings; constant inspection of operations at each plant (pardon me, college) by expert cost-reducers from head office; a consolidated advertising and selling department—these are only a few of the main lines of economy.

But the great gain will be the enormous improvement in the delivery of the article produced. Every branch will be giving exactly the same lectures at the same hour all over the continent. An education can thus be acquired anywhere and everywhere. The student can take the first six lectures in Philosophy 2 at McGill in September, then move southward with the family in the Rolls-Royce or the Ford and take the seventh at Amherst, the eighth at Harvard, the ninth and tenth at Yale, a few more at Columbia, and so on down the line till he writes the Christmas exam. at Miami. (Students in certain courses will have to detour round Tennessee.) New Yorkers can sit on Tuesday and Thursday at Columbia and on Saturday at McGill, and thus participate weekly in the important silk-and-alcohol commerce at Rouse's Point. Hockey players will flock north while tennis enthusiasts are going south. It will be possible to get an education while travelling in lingerie, or qualifying for a divorce, or hunting big game in the Rockies.

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The Rockefeller Foundation ought to appreciate all this, if anybody should. What is it, after all, but applying the gasoline pump system to what is, next to gasoline and tyres, the most important luxury article in America? The college buildings will have to be brightened up a little with electric lights and gilt paint; but at McGill the Roddick Gates, and at Toronto the Memorial Arch, can easily be made to look like a filling station. The only objection that has ever been made to this proposal was raised by a non-academic person, who pointed out that the professors would not know the students, nor the students the professors. I communicated this objection to a professor, who at once replied, "Who wants to know students?" and to an undergraduate student, who even more promptly answered, "Thank goodness for that! Who wants to know professors?"





BACK-TO-THE-LAND

LAST spring I became a Back-to-the-Land man. I am still a Back-to-the-Land man. In fact, I defy anybody to turn his back to the Land and his face to the Good Old Town with greater rigidity, more supreme determination, than I do.

The Land is all right. It is so much all right that I feel it can get on without my personally remaining on it to see that it doesn't get away, or melt, or rot, or mildew, or anything like that. It doesn't need me. It is so firm and solid and has such splendid foundations. Whereas the Good Old Town, I feel somehow, requires my help. After all, if we townsmen didn't stick to the town there wouldn't be any town to stick to, whereas the Land would still be there if there were nobody on it. In fact, so the geologists tell me, the Laurentian Mountains, where I have been Back-to-the-Landing, were there for several million years when there was nobody but a few Indians within a thousand miles of them. It doesn't seem to have done them any harm. When I look at some of the bungalows with which some of us Back-to-the-Landers have decorated the sides of their placid lakes and the slopes of their immemorial hills, I wonder if they wouldn't just as soon have us go Back-to-the-

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Town again and leave them in their primitive peace and quietude.

There is a great deal of this Open-Air Literature being written nowadays, especially in some of the magazines. I think it is due to the rise in city rents. A man lives in the city, just as you or I might, for ten or fifteen or twenty years, and suddenly his landlord drops down on him and hoists the rent $66\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. The man gets mad and goes and lives in the country, and while in the country he writes articles on the beauty of living in the country and sells them to the magazines until he has made enough to pay the increased rent for a few years, and then he comes back to the city, and starts to live again. There are so many of these articles being written that it is difficult to dodge all of them, and I suppose some of them must have unconsciously influenced my mind. Anyhow, last spring I found myself listening to something inside me that kept on telling me I must go out into the country and become a landed proprietor.

It is not hard to become a landed proprietor, provided you have at least ten dollars. Go to a real estate agent, give him the ten dollars and sign a paper promising to pay ten dollars more every week for the rest of the twentieth century ; you are then landed, and at the end of the century you will become a proprietor. Failure to pay any instalment means that you lose all that you have paid before ; so that really the sooner you begin to fail to pay your instalments the better off you are, and the very best instalment to fail to pay is the first, because then you don't lose anything, except possibly the love and brotherly regard of the real estate agent.

All this, however, is by the way. I started out to

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tell why I am willing now to leave the Land to look after itself, and the blades of grass to double up on themselves if they want to and remain as they are if they don't. Somebody once said that he who made two blades of grass grow where one grew before was a benefactor to the human race, but it seems to me now that he was looking at the thing from a one-sided and selfish viewpoint. After all, we do not know at what point blades of grass may begin to suffer from congestion and overcrowding.

Which reminds me that I went to the country expecting (from a long perusal of Open-Air Literature) that the country would turn out to be populated by people with a very different attitude towards life from that of us city-dwellers. In this sort of way, you know. In the city, of course, things are a little crowded. We do love our neighbours, naturally ; we have to—the minister tells us so every Sunday, if he gets a chance. But we do it with limitations. It isn't that we don't *love* the man who stands on our corns in the trolley-car going home after a hard day at the office ; we do love him, passionately, but we wish there were not so much of him, and that what there is of him were in, let us say, Jerusalem. It isn't that we don't *love* the children of the family in the flat next door ; we just worship the little brats, but if it were safe to expedite their path to heaven by putting poison in their morning milk we would do it, not maliciously, but in order to be able to sleep for an hour or two after 6.30 in the morning and to enjoy half-an-hour's quiet in the evening without the pound of the pianola and the phonograph's weary whine. They are all perfectly all right, they're human beings (of a sort), and if

they only lived in Halifax and something happened to them we would take up a collection for them like a shot ; but they won't go to Halifax, confound them, and the consequence is they get in our way.

Well, the country has more space than the city, and I thought that the people in the country would be, say, a bit more spacious. In the Open-Air Literature they are the most spacious people that ever lived. There isn't a soul in the Open-Air Literature (which includes the Open-Air Movies) who isn't open-hearted and open-handed and just bubbling over with expansive friendliness. They seem to breathe it in along with the smell from the silo, and drink it with the patent medicines which form their staple beverage in these virtuous days. There is never a curmudgeon in all the Open-Air Literature, except the village money-lender, and he is one only because a city girl blighted his heart many years ago. According to the books and stories, they all stand on the front stoop with open arms outstretched for the welcoming of strangers ; and among themselves they are just one great big family of brothers and sisters. I went out to the country feeling that at last I was going to learn what friendship really was.

The day I arrived in the village the real estate man drove me round a bit and told me who the chief nabobs were.

There was a very prosperous-looking house just across the way from mine and a little further down the road—a good old stone cottage cleverly modernised, with wide verandas and a long rakish-looking roof and a lovely avenue of elms, and a

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glimpse through the door of a long cool hallway. "Nice-looking place," I remarked.

"Huh!" grunted the real estate man, around the corner of his cigar. His tone implied assent to my opinion, but hostility to the subject of it. "Place all right. Old man Jackson's. You won't see much o' *him*!" And he chuckled sardonically.

"No? Why's that?"

"Oh, I got the better of him in a little fight in the Council six years ago, and he ain't forgotten it, you bet. B'sides, they never go out. Too much work keeping up the place."

"Yes, but what's your fight got to do with me?"

"Oh, pshaw! Nothin', of course, but he knows I sold you the place, and he'll figure you're more or less of a friend of mine, and that's enough. Besides, I tell you, they never go out anyway, and nobody ever goes there. You see, Mrs. Jackson, she's a daughter of the Smilesees, and all the other daughters of the Smilesees they all married around the village, and none of them ain't done so brilliant well, and they figure that Jackson and Mrs. Jackson they fixed up the old house this gaudy style just out of pride and vainglory to make the other Smiles' girls and their husbands look small; and they're pretty mad about it, I tell you. No, there's no quarrel, what you could call a quarrel, but they just don't drop around like. Oh, you'll find lots of people like that in this village."

"Social life? Oh, yes, there's lots of social life, all you could want of it. Why, the Methodists, they've got a Ladies' Aid that meets five times a year, and has ice-cream and cake every time. Goes to a different house each meeting; my wife, she goes, except when

it's at Jackson's or Morrow's or Patterson's or Smiles's or one of the Toplady girls. And she says it's real fun watching the hostess sorting them out so the women who aren't talking to one another don't get at the same table. And the Presbyterians . . ."

"I didn't know there was a Presbyterian church," I remarked.

"There ain't. There aren't enough Presbyterians to make a church, but there's enough for them not to go to the Methodist Church. See? Three families in the village and old McClintock, the bachelor, two miles up the road. They used to have a minister come and preach at Andy Macpherson's now and again, but since they got all split up over this Church Union business they seem to have quit that. And Joe Starr, he's a 'Piscopalian since he got elected vice-president of the Laurentian Lumber Limited, so he don't go to church except when he's in the city—that's what *he* says, and maybe it's right, because, anyway, he had the Bishop sitting with him in the parlour-car last time I saw him coming back from town. And he's got a church organ in the house, too—had it put in same time as the new billiard table, and there ain't much use to either of them that I can see, except when Billy Starr comes home from college, and then he stirs 'em both up a bit. Billy says the old man put the organ and the billiard table in when he left the Methodists, to show that he was emancipated; but I reckon his business dealings was just about as 'mancipated before he left the Methodists as they is now. And there's two Baptist families; they don't have anything to do with anybody here, because it takes them all their time going over to the

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Brotherly Love Mission at North Mills, twelve miles up the line. So that, take it by and large, society in this town is considerable cut up."

It was. It was destined to be even more so before I got away from it. For I am proud to say that in a few brief months I introduced an entirely new line of cleavage, which is likely to last for several generations and is really the only permanent improvement—barring the paint on our front veranda—that we introduced into our village.

The summer was hot. The dining-room in the cottage that my friend the real estate man sold us was stuffy. We took to drinking our after-dinner coffee out on the veranda, which happened to be quite visible from the village street. It worked nicely, and we began taking the dessert course out there also. I am not sure that we did not take the whole meal on occasions—or it may be that on occasions in the hot weather we just left out the rest of the meal and got along with coffee and dessert or a salad. The populace had never seen anything like it. The spectacle of people—civilised people with a dining-room to retire into—eating and drinking on a public veranda, exposed to the vulgar gaze, struck them as inconceivably novel and entertaining. They paraded up and down the village street during our orgies and long after them, gazing fixedly in the direction of our veranda. They commented on our proceedings in audible tones.

We stood it for a week or two, thinking that curiosity, even village curiosity, must diminish with time. It didn't. The crowd grew thicker as the hour of our public potations became more generally

known. My wife developed a theory that people were coming from adjacent villages. They began leaning against our fence, possibly to sniff the aroma and learn what brand of coffee we used and whether we put anything in it. The fence began to sag. So did our patience.

A happy thought occurred to us. We had by this time met various villagers in a social way, and we began to ask them in to dinner, thinking that possibly the presence on the veranda of old familiar faces would reconcile the crowd to our peculiar ways and induce them to leave us alone. My wife, wildly optimistic, even suggested that after they had tried the delights of coffee on the veranda, some at least of our guests would go away and adopt the same practice on their own verandas.

The first couple of guests endured the public coffee-drinking, but were obviously uncomfortable. The second couple developed a sudden and pressing engagement at the very minute when we pushed back our dinner chairs. The third couple whom we invited said :

“ But you won’t serve coffee on the veranda, will you ? ”

“ We always do if the weather is hot,” said my wife. “ Why not ? ”

“ Well, of course, there is no real reason, but—you see, some of our friends here think it is just a little—well, ostentatious. Rather showing off that you do have coffee after dinner, you know. Of course, that may not be why you do it but . . . ”

* * * *

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The fourth couple declined outright, without comment. We afterwards learned that their view of the matter was that eating and drinking were like going to bed ; they were private and disreputable functions which should only be performed behind closed doors and—at night time—drawn blinds. They were convinced that coffee on the veranda was not decent. It might have been tolerable if we had merely brought out the coffee in the cups and drunk it as speedily as possible and taken the cups back again ; but to flaunt a table-cloth and a sugar-and-cream service in full gaze of the public highway was like saying one's prayers on the village bandstand.

Eventually we got three of the more progressive of the younger families to take coffee with us on the veranda, and even—once or twice—to use their own verandas for the forbidden ritual. By the end of the summer the whole village was divided into veranda-coffee-drinkers and their supporters (including a few who saw no great harm in it but were not prepared to do it themselves) and anti-veranda-coffee-drinkers and their supporters (including a large number who were not particular about coffee but disliked any change in the social habits of the village). The two factions expressed their views about one another with great vigour. When Mrs. Morrow called Mrs. Starr a painted Jezebel, social relations between the factions became strained. When Mrs. Jackson called Miss Toplady a perennial pterodactyl, the factions ceased to visit one another. We had split the village wide apart in an entirely new place. After that I felt we had done all that could be expected of us, and we came back to town.

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I HAVE, I must say, a great deal of sympathy with superior persons. Their path in life, in this age of the triumph of the inferior, is terribly hard. It is becoming so difficult for them to convince the inferior persons of their inferiority.

It was not always so. In days of old—which means anywhere from the creation of the world to the first candidacy of William Jennings Bryan—there was no such difficulty. The superiority of superior persons established itself automatically. A gentleman encased in a beautifully jointed suit of the best Toledo steel, mounted on a well-trained and armour-plated charger, and provided with a lance fifteen feet long, is essentially superior to a man on foot with nothing but a bow and arrow. What is more, his superiority is immediately evident. It leaps at the eyes, as our delightful French friends put it. Not only is it an article of general belief, but any common person so ill-advised as to entertain heterodox views about it and to seek to put them to the proof is almost certain to be speedily abolished, long before he can bring in a minority report. In the days of chivalry, the superiority of superior persons was constantly being made manifest in this manner. Indeed the damaged remains of those who disputed it became the best possible evidence of its truth.

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And a little later, when the superior persons gave up their steel armour and ceased to look like exaggerated lobsters mounted on horseback, they still retained portable evidences of their superiority. They alone were able to wear that neat and efficient little weapon, the small-sword or rapier. And this was a perfectly satisfactory implement for the establishment of superiority. In novels written by modern authors, with no respect for superiority and no knowledge of fencing, you will read how on occasions an inferior person armed with a trunk of a tree or a piece of old red sandstone would put to flight a superior person with a rapier. But these tales are products of the modern democratic spirit ; they are fathered by the wish, not by the historic fact. You do not read any such bosh in the literature written by the authors who lived in the rapier days. They knew better. They were surrounded by rapier points, ready to stick into them whenever they showed an inadequate appreciation of the superiority of superior persons ; and they never showed it. Mr. Jeffery Farnol would have written quite differently if he had lived in the age of Dr. Johnson.

But time went on, and weapons of offence and defence kept getting cheaper and cheaper, until they became accessible to persons of no superiority whatever ; and the troubles of the superior person began. A suit of armour and a battle-horse were very expensive articles, and besides, the owner needed a castle in which to keep them at night, with the result that nobody but a fairly large landowner or a member of his family ever attempted to keep them at all. A rapier was less expensive but still beyond the means

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of the majority of inferior persons ; and its exclusiveness was kept up for a long time by the organised association of rapier-owners for the purpose of insisting that the rapier should be accompanied by other accessories of gentility, such as a coat-of-arms, a capacious wig and a flowered satin waistcoat. A rapier, though not so large as a battle-horse and a suit of armour, is still visible to the naked eye ; and a person who undertook to carry a rapier merely because he had money enough to buy one, and without possessing the proper concomitants, was likely to be set upon by large bodies of members of the amalgamated order of rapier-wearers and deprived of his sticker. We of to-day can form some conception of his position, by imagining a person who should acquire a trowel and some mortar and sally forth to lay bricks without being admitted to the membership of the Bricklayers' Union.

The advent of the pistol and revolver completely changed the aspect of affairs, and put an end, for a generation or two at least, to the possibility of superior persons maintaining their superiority by physical force. For absolutely anybody can own a revolver (I am aware that the law in various communities thinks differently, but this is one of those matters on which the law is obviously "a hass"), and almost anybody, at any rate among the male sex, can shoot it reasonably straight if the target is near enough. Its use cannot be limited to superior persons, even in the widest possible interpretation of the words.

It is true that in the American West an aristocratic society seems to have been built up and to have

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flourished for a short time on the basis, not of the mere possession of a revolver, but of a high degree of skill, and especially of rapidity in its use. For a good part of a generation in Nevada the test of superiority was the ability to "draw" on your man before he could draw on you. But I am credibly informed that this interesting aristocracy has already passed away ; and it is evident that it contained in itself the seeds of its own dissolution. For consider : a member of an aristocracy based solely on skill with the revolver is unable to recognise a fellow-member of his aristocracy except by the actual process of "drawing" on him ; and by the time that process is complete, one of the two is usually dead. The process of selection by which such an aristocracy is built up is obviously too destructive. There is no point in superior persons going around killing one another on account of nothing more than a very slight difference in degree of superiority ; in the old aristocracies their efforts were devoted almost wholly to keeping really inferior persons in their place, a pursuit which involved no great mortality among the superior. So it is not surprising to learn that even in Nevada it is no longer considered good form to fortify one's social position by putting a bullet through any gentleman who may appear to have questioned or underestimated it. It would, to say the least, be disturbing to the *bonhomie* of the Carson City Rotary Club luncheon, if the chairman, instead of fining Dick Jones twenty-five cents for talking during the presidential speech, should pull a pocket-gun and puncture Jones's third left rib.

To-day, therefore, thanks to the appallingly rapid

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strides of democracy, it is almost impossible for the claimant of any sort of superiority over his fellow-mortals to get that superiority recognised. Most of us have almost given up trying. We content ourselves with our own consciousness of our own superiority, and let it go at that. We keep our pride warm by means of exercise, in the absence of any sunshine of public admiration. Frankly, I feel that this is an unsatisfactory arrangement. It leads to a perpetual and radical difference of opinion between oneself and one's neighbours, on the important subject of one's own superiority—a difference which strikes at the heart of friendly social intercourse. Things must have been much more pleasant when everybody was graded in accordance with a universally accepted schedule of excellence. The present condition leads also to an attitude of contempt towards one's fellow-citizens—a contempt deeper and more bitter than that of the old days. One has to say to oneself not merely : “ How inferior is this person to myself ! ” but also : “ What a fool he must be, not only not to know it, but to think, as I see he does, that he himself is really superior to me ! ” I begin to suspect that the French were unwittingly seeking to combine two incompatible things when they declared for Equality and Fraternity together. The more equal we get the less brotherly we are. After all, among genuine brothers in a real family there is always an older and a younger, and they are not equal.

But, it will be argued, surely there are certain sorts of superiority which even to-day can be demonstrated beyond peradventure and are admitted without

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argument. A may be superior to B in wealth, while B is superior to A in intellect ; C to D in physical strength, D to C in personal beauty. That, of course, is true, and there is a mild sort of satisfaction in contemplating one's own superiorities even in these limited and conditioned respects. I am myself something of an expert in blowing smoke-rings ; and it is a constant source of consolation to me, faced as I am by a circle of acquaintances who have either more money, or more brains, or better digestions, or a larger knowledge of modern poetry, to turn to my one little speciality and blow myself a few smoke-rings and reflect that here at least is a thing in which I can surpass them all. But all happiness is purchased with sorrow, and this modest pride in my one accomplishment is the very thing which exposes me to my bitterest pangs of chagrin. I can stand a richer man, a brainier man, a healthier man, than myself without any special suffering—I have trained myself, have had to train myself, to do so—but every now and then I meet a man who blows better smoke-rings, and I will be frank to admit that the spectacle fills me with an intolerable loathing, a loathing of myself, of my rival, and of my art.

But it is not of these limited superiorities, these excellences *in re* so-and-so, that I am speaking now. They are all right in their way, but it is a small way. They are in the plural, and almost unlimited in number ; anybody can be superior in something ; there must be a superiority of a sort about being the most universally inferior person in the world. But the thing of which I am speaking is "superiority" in the singular. It is impossible to define, but there is

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only one of it, and everybody knows what it is. It is the superiority with which the king is superior to the queen, the queen to the jack, the jack to the ten-spot, the trump to the whole lot of them. It is both *de jure* and *de facto*. It is, so to speak, payable on demand. It is the cash money of the world of superiorities, while the other things are merely commodities. And I fear that superiority of this kind, legal tender anywhere, payable on demand, is becoming extinct. Its disappearance will leave us in a world of barter, squabbling wretchedly about the relative values of our own miserable little "superiorities," and each of us unwilling to accept the uncertified currency of our neighbours. It is a tragic prospect.

Yet even now, in this painful situation, I think I detect one single ray of hope, one cheering beam, the first glimmer, I long to believe, of a new day of unquestionable superiority for superior persons. That ray which seems to light up the distant pathway of the future seems to be—can it be?—yes, surely it is—the beam cast by the headlights of an automobile. Can it be that the possession of a swift and high-powered car is destined to confer, what was conferred by the suit of armour, the spear and the battle-axe in the days of King Arthur, by the rapier in the days of King Charles, by the "quick draw" in the days of Buffalo Bill—an incontrovertible and unquestionable right of superiority? I believe that it is so. I believe that we are within sight of the development of a class of superior persons, who will not have to argue with us about their superiority, who will not even have to tell us—who will merely have to run us down.

In order to establish its efficacy, any new machine

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for the demonstration of superiority will have to contain within itself the power to trample largely upon the police rules of modern democratic society, which is now organised upon the principle that neither superiority nor inferiority (of the sort we are talking about, the absolute sort) does or can exist, and that all efforts to claim it must be nipped in the bud. The eight-cylinder car seems to me to contain a good deal of that power—probably enough of it. For the annoying regulations and petty limitations of modern democratic society are as ineffectual against the modern sport roadster as a resolution of the village council of Runnymede would have been against the barons there assembled in the reign of John, or a fire-arms licence law against the “bad men” of Nevada. The modern policeman is in just the same plight against the roadster roysterers as the watchman of Walpole’s time was against the “Mohocks” who nailed him up in his sentry-box or dropped him into the Thames.

Inferior persons will no longer be able to club together (calling themselves the Community) and hire professional defenders, be they police or watchmen or speed cops or what you like, to deny their inferiority and to oppose the efforts of the superior to claim superiority. I see in the Hispano-Suiza (whatever kind of car that may be) the new Excalibur, and in the Automobile Club the new Knights of the Round Table. All they seem to lack is a Holy Grail.

And—as always happens when once superiority is real, forceful and incontestable—the mob, the proletariat, the democracy, the inferior persons, are already developing a genuine and deep-seated respect

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for the new superiors. Not, be it noted, for their moral character ; it was not moral superiority that enabled the barons to be so baronial. Not for their intellectual excellence ; the mob now as ever hates and distrusts any intelligence better than its own. Not for their public spirit ; not for their devotion to the Republic or the Empire ; not for their personal beauty—well, yes, a little perhaps for their beauty, for beauty is indeed a force, and a young man and a young woman in a Hispano-Suiza and dressed to match it are undeniably beautiful. No, it is for their power that we begin to reverence these devil-may-care youngsters who make our roads a peril and our roadhouses a paradise. Their power to do a thing and to get away with it. Their absolute faith in their superiority and our inferiority. Their contempt for the shams of democratic creeds and democratic institutions. Their will to be free, to be untrammelled by their inferiors.

For there is an instinct in the human soul which impels it to recognise its own inferiority when face to face with a superior soul who is acting as the inferior soul would like to act if it were superior. A half-hearted claim of superiority arouses only disgust and laughter. The complete and unashamed assertion of it, backed by facts and accompanied by force, at once compels respect.

To slay a man by means of a Ford car is to commit murder. To slay a man with a Hispano-Suiza is merely to exercise one of the “*droits de seigneur*.”

THE VICARIOUS THRILL

TRAVEL, also, is not what it used to be.

I put in that word "also" because it seems to me that of late I have written a great many articles beginning with the statement, or the implication, that something or other was not what it used to be. Whether this is a sign of advancing age, or merely of the development of the essayist mind, I cannot say. Possibly the two things are one and the same. The lyric poem is probably not a natural form of expression for old age, and the essay may not be a natural form of expression for youth. I am aware that old men write lyrics, just as elderly sopranos sing grand opera, and with much the same result, namely, that we talk about the excellence of their technique and pass on to less painful subjects. I am aware also that young persons write essays; but they only do so under compulsion, and what they write in that manner often sounds more elderly than the most elderly of the works they are trying to imitate. When they want to be young, to be themselves, they write poetry and stories. They use the language of their generation. Essay-writing is therefore an elderly art. Essayists are elderly persons, either in years or in character; the essay is by its very nature *laudator temporis acti*. Things are not what they were.

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Travel also is not what it was—except perhaps to the young who write no essays about it. The other day I read, in the travel advertisement section of a popular magazine, a little story which illustrates what I mean. A group of travellers (yes, the writer called them travellers, and made no apology to the shades of Marco Polo, Balboa and Captain Cook) sat on the platform of the observation car in the railway station of Regina, Sask. Three mounted policemen came into the station with a poor wretch of an Indian, handcuffed.

“Well,” said the middle-aged man in the grey polo coat, “that makes it perfect.”

“What makes what perfect?” asked one of the group on the platform.

“Seeing the Royal North-West police come in with a prisoner.”

“You see,” he went on, “I’m just returning from a trip around the world. I’ve been tied down to my desk for years, and my travelling had been confined to business trips or an occasional vacation jaunt.

“Well, three months ago I cut loose and took the missus and signed up for one of these round-the-world cruises. I swore I’d forget business and have a good time.

“I’ve had it all right. And do you know why? It’s because I’ve felt all along that I’ve been moving through a series of interesting novels.

“Venetian gondoliers, Arabs, Swiss yodellers and mountain climbers, Student Corps at Heidelberg, London Bobbies, Scotland Yard, natives diving for coins in tropical waters, Bedouins, flowers in Kew,



I SEE THE "MOUNTIES" BRING IN A MAN

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British Army posts in India—these are some of the pictures which have been photographed on my brain and that I'll never forget.

“And to top it all, here, a few miles from home, I see the ‘mounties’ bring in a man. As I said, that makes it perfect.”

I am not so innocent as to suppose that this little incident really happened. That is of no importance whatever. It is not an Event. It is a vastly greater thing than an Event : it is an Advertisement. “I see the ‘mounties’ bring in a man. That makes it perfect.” That is not the reflection of a single fat, middle-aged tourist in a grey polo coat. It is the reflection which, in the opinion of a skilled advertising writer, will commend itself to a million fat and middle-aged potential tourists, as embodying a true and lofty ideal of the art of travel.

The vicarious thrill. The sense of adventure which comes merely from seeing somebody else adventuring. The population of Imperial Rome got a vicarious thrill out of seeing the lions kill the Christians and the gladiators kill one another ; but they did not delude themselves that there was anything educational about the performance. The bucks of the Regency period got a vicarious thrill out of seeing a highwayman hanged at daybreak ; but they never claimed that they themselves were doing anything specially adventurous in attending the performance. We are too squeamish to-day to go in for spectacles involving actual bloodshed. But we sit on little folding camp-stools within reach of an electric bell which will summon to our hand any and all of the luxuries of modern civilisation, and we

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see an unusually picturesque policeman engaged in the unpleasant but necessary duty of escorting an unusually dirty prisoner, and we say to ourselves that this is "travel," this is "seeing life." We take photographs of it as we go, and on returning home we lecture to the Rotary Club about it ; and the thrill which the mounted police and the Indian may possibly, though not by any means certainly, have experienced at first hand, and which we experienced at second hand, is passed on to our brother Rotarians at third hand and their wives and children at fourth hand, until the whole community is vibrating with mild thrills propagated by an incident which may not even have caused a tremor of excitement to any of its original participants.

The fat man on the camp-stool thinks he would like to be a North-West Mounted Policeman. He wouldn't, really, but he does not know that, or at least he does not admit it to himself. He is prevented from being a North-West Mounted Policeman by several things, among them being his age, his fatness, his distaste for active exertion, and probably also his distaste for personal risk. But he assures himself that the only thing which keeps him from being a North-West Mounted Policeman is his business and the duty which he owes to it, to his community and to his wife and children. He gazes lovingly upon the North-West Mounted Policeman, and even upon the bedraggled Indian—for there is another part of him that would like to be a bedraggled Indian, and is quite sure that if it were it would be able to evade even the North-West Mounted Police—he gazes upon these persons and murmurs, "There, but for the

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claims of commerce, go I, John Smith, of Oshkosh, Wis. ! ”

It is very nice indeed that fat middle-aged gentlemen in polo (not Marco Polo) coats should be able to run around the world comfortably on camp-stools with negro porters at their elbows. It is good for the passenger departments of the railways, which would get along but poorly if they had to depend upon the patronage of the young ; most of the young are too busy and too poor to run around the world, and those who can seem to prefer to do it in a vehicle which they can steer themselves even at the cost of having to do without the electric bell and the negro porter. Besides, the middle-aged man must do something. It is easier to make a competence before fifty than it used to be, and one lives longer after fifty to enjoy it. If the middle-aged travellers were not crowding the observation platform they might well be doing something much worse. I do not object to their being tourists ; I only object to them calling themselves “ travellers ” and imagining that they are being deeply immersed in a stormy flood of adventure.

In a little while our friend from the Regina station will be back home in Oshkosh, preparing his lecture for the Rotary Club and sending his films down to the druggist to have lantern slides printed from them. If he has any time left over from his business, and still has a yearning for adventure, he may find it not at all impossible to obtain some in Oshkosh. At no great distance from that city he will probably be able to find persons or groups of persons whose attitude and activities are quite as anti-social as

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those of the unfortunate Indian in Regina, and who are much less systematically impressed than the Saskatchewan Indians with the inadvisability of being anti-social. He will find bodies of police, not so picturesquely clad and certainly not so splendidly efficient as those of Regina, but similarly occupied in spasmodic attempts to persuade the anti-social elements to stop being so. If the Wisconsin police do not always, like the "mounties," "bring in their man," their failure is due not so much to their own deficiencies as to the interference of politicians, some of whom are probably among his most intimate friends. If he really wants adventure he can get it either by going out some night on an expedition for the suppression of anti-social activity (probably bootlegging), or even more satisfactorily by starting a campaign to persuade the politicians not to interfere with police activities—a species of campaign which had to be conducted several times on behalf of the "mounties" before they were able to acquire their present imposing reputation. Either of these alternatives would, I suspect, provide him with at least a thousand times as much thrill as that which he obtained in the Regina railway station.

But did anybody ever hear of even the most ardent of the Coliseum fanatics jumping down into the arena to help one of his favourite gladiators when hard pressed? One did not. They continued to sit placidly aloft, and I think I hear one of them, across the intervening millennia, remark to his neighbour as they stretch forth their hands with down-turned thumbs, "That makes it perfect."

THE BIBLIOTHECARY

LIBRARIES are to this age, perhaps, what churches and cathedrals were to the Middle Ages. (It seems to be pretty well admitted that churches and cathedrals are not !) Many of us spend more, and more worshipful, hours in the libraries than we do in the churches. I should be sorry to see my favourite church closed, but the closing of my pet library would move me, not to sorrow, but to a very active indignation. The forcible suppression of my particular form of worship (if such a thing were conceivable in these days of unlimited toleration of an infinity of forms) would merely drive me to look for the nearest counterpart to it among the permitted worships ; I should never dream of forming a secret society to carry on my proscribed ceremonials underground. But the suppression of my favourite library or of any important part of it (such a suppression as might take place at any minute in Chicago, or in a dozen other places on this continent) would move me to instant action, and if necessary to a deep and daring conspiracy with fellow library-worshippers to maintain in secret the circulation and perusal of the forbidden books. There may yet be a Covenant of Evolutionists in Tennessee, a Conventicle of Friends of the Freedom of History in Illinois. Yes, the more I think of it, the surer I

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become that the library is the cathedral of the twentieth century. Indeed, Christian Science, the one great religious foundation of the age, has as many reading-rooms as it has churches, and they actually are reading-rooms, whereas the churches are only churches in somewhat the same way as a radiator is a grate-fire, or a phonograph record is an orchestra.

The cathedrals of the Middle Ages were largely built and endowed by robber barons, much concerned for the future of their souls. Both this concern and, naturally, the generosity which was the result of it seem to have largely disappeared. It is the libraries of to-day that are endowed by the robber barons, concerned not so much for their souls in heaven as for their posthumous glory on this earth. The change is symptomatic; but it has not taken place in the mind of the robber baron alone. In the Middle Ages he built cathedrals because he knew the people wanted them; he had only to get the proper saint for the dedication and the fane would be filled with worshippers. To-day he builds few cathedrals because there is little popular demand; but a library will attract its worshippers no matter where it may be erected. Robber and robbed alike, we are "off" cathedrals (except as antiques); robber and robbed alike, we are strong for libraries. They are the modern Temple of the Holy Wisdom; they are the shrine of the Word; out of their issue-desks, rather than out of the pulpits, proceedeth Knowledge.

The librarians, it follows, are on their way to becoming a priesthood. (A little persecution will help the process immeasurably.) Already there is a tendency to demand a severe noviciate before



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admission to the Order. True, the new ministry includes members of both sexes, with women in predominance. But after all this is the twentieth century, an era of sex equality possibly merging into one of female superiority ; and nothing else was to be expected. It was my privilege recently to behold a gathering of two thousand librarians, assembled from all parts of the continent of North America ; and they exhibited many evidences of their proper sense of the high nature of their calling, of the power which they wield over the popular mind, and of the responsibility which that power imposes upon them.

For myself, and I am but a common man of my period, I am what libraries and librarians have made me, with a little assistance from a professor of Greek and a few poets. I have been a regular attendant at libraries ever since I was high enough to see over the counter (nowadays they catch them even younger, luring them in to listen to stories long before they are able to read). I am nowhere quite so happy as in a library. It does not matter to me that the books do not belong to me personally ; indeed, it is better that they should not, for thus I am not tempted to lend those I like to my friends—a proceeding which invariably loses me both book and friend. The only thing that does matter is that I should be able to get the books I want when I want them, and in this I have always done very well. The books that I want are seldom those which other people in large numbers are wanting at the same time. They are frequently those which nobody other than myself wants or is ever likely to want, but I have

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usually found that librarians can be induced to buy even such books if approached with a combination of wistfulness and critical assurance. I am, in short, a confirmed library-worm—one of the most harmless of God's creatures. There are many such. There might well be more.

The propagation of librariolatry is hindered by many obstacles, some of which could readily be removed. As a religious body we library-worms are handicapped by an excessive individualism which prevents us from getting to know one another and engaging in any concerted action. We resort to the library at different hours, not assembling ourselves together, but rather distributing ourselves over the whole of the working day. We come in contact with no one save the librarian or his assistant. If we meet a fellow-worshipper ahead of us or behind us at the delivery-desk, we glare at him with eyes of hate ; he may be taking out the book we want before we can get it, or returning it just after we have had to put up with another. But this is a minor matter, and is largely due to our having had too easy a time. A little strenuous persecution of libraries will soon teach us solidarity. The librarians have our names and addresses, and can call us to arms when the occasion comes. When they are ready to lead we shall be ready to follow. I am not sure that the organising and drilling of a sort of officers' training corps, under some such title as the Library Readers' Defence Association, would not be a good idea for early execution.

The terminology of the whole library business is hopelessly wrong. It is unfortunate, to begin with,

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that the English-speaking world should have adopted a word of Latin origin, which in every other language relates to the selling of books and not to their circulation, to designate the place where, and the mechanism by which, books are made available for temporary use by those who do not wish to buy them. The Public Library should be the Public Bibliothek, and the term "library" should be handed over as in French and other languages to the booksellers, whose trade designation is, for these euphemistic days, sadly undignified. The librarian could then call himself a Bibliothecary, and the length, the sonority and the Attic character of the title would add greatly to his standing in the community. Nor is it one of the least of the objections to the present nomenclature that the English and American palate (I do not include the Scottish) finds it more and more difficult to enunciate its awkward succession of liquid consonants. I know several people who never take out books because they are afraid of being asked where they got them, and having to explain that it was at the "libwawy."

Then again all this talk about "borrowing" and "lending" is a grievous mistake. It compels us to violate, in name at least, one of the few really sound instructions uttered by the elderly Polonius, and it puts us in an undignified position, besides having led many librarians into the erroneous assumption that the books in their library belonged to them. For the books in a public circulating library are in strict truth neither borrowed nor lent. They are issued and returned. They belong to the whole body of persons entitled to use the library. So far from my

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being under an obligation to the library when I take a book out, the library is under obligation to me, for I am helping it to perform that function for which it exists, namely, to increase the reading of the community, whereas my neighbour who never takes any books out is not helping it at all. The truest friends of any library are those who take out the most books. Similarly, I believe, clergymen hold that the truest friends of the Church are not those who pay for their seats and never sit in them, but those who, however little they pay, occupy their seats regularly every Sunday.

It is not strange that, having spent so large a part of my life in libraries, I should at times have thought of becoming a librarian. Early surroundings, as in the case of the infant Samuel, have a pronounced effect upon inclination. Once in my life I was offered a job as a librarian. It was a great temptation. To be the absolute boss of a couple of hundred thousand books—to go in and out amongst them in business hours and closing hours alike—to take them down from their shelves with nobody to say me nay, and no rules to break except my own—to buy (within limitations) the new books that I wanted, and to leave unbought (with exceptions) the new books that I didn't want—this has always appeared to me to be as near to my particular brand of heaven as I shall ever attain in this life. I had an acceptance all written out and ready.

And then I began to reflect upon the librarians I had known, who are very numerous and of both sexes, and include quite a number of my very best friends. And as I reflected upon them it began to

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be borne in upon me that they were without exception very tidy persons, by which I mean that they practised tidiness as a habit of life, eighteen hours of the working day. Probably they are also tidy in their sleep, but since I am not a psycho-analyst I have never had an opportunity of collecting the dreams and examining the subconscious processes of librarians or any other class of persons. I feel sure, however, that they are tidy even in the free and uncontrolled movements of sleep or reverie, that all their concepts are duly card-indexed and respond only to the proper key-word, and in general that their thoughts and dreams alike are as different as possible from my own helter-skelter mental meanderings.

And as I continued to reflect I perceived that these friends of mine who were librarians were tidy because they were librarians, because the first function, the prime virtue, of a modern librarian is to preserve his books and his catalogue in their perfect arrangement, because a book or a card out of place or a wrong word in an entry is the supreme evil of the library world. And I realised also that however cheerfully untidy and scattery I might be when I entered the library profession, I should, if once I did enter it, eventually become as meticulous as the most lady-like of my professional fellows. With a gasp of horror I perceived that the time would come when I should regard a book, not as something to be taken to bed one night, put on the study table the next and chucked into the attic the third, but as something that must always occupy a certain place on a certain shelf and bear a certain Dewey-decimal number. And I dashed downstairs, rescued my letter of

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acceptance from the hall table, and tore it up stamp and all. For I have no desire to become tidy.

The obligations of the new Priesthood of the Bibliothek (which will be greater than I shall ever be able to bear) will doubtless, as usual, be three in number. They will not be poverty, chastity, and obedience—three virtues which have lost much of their repute in this modern age. I am not sure what the other two of them will be. One of them might well be courage. Perhaps one of them will be tolerance. But whatever they are, the greatest of the three will be tidiness.



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IT appears to be necessary, if human society is to function agreeably, that we should all of us at times pretend an interest in our neighbours which we do not feel. Kept within certain bounds, this pretence makes the world a pleasanter place in which to live. But obviously there is a limit beyond which this pretence should not go—a point at which sincerity becomes better for everybody. Like everything else, pretence is subject to the law of diminishing returns ; a little of it is of great value for the enhancement of the general happiness, a little more does not add quite so much to the stock, and finally we reach a point where the increase in happiness is not equal to the cost of the pretence which secures it.

I do a good deal of this pretending myself. I am beginning to wonder whether I do not do too much. If Smith knew how unutterably I am bored by the recital of his prowess on the radio, he would be deeply hurt, and in order to save his own feelings he would at once decide that I must be a fool. If I knew how completely Smith is unstirred by the tale of my own golfing achievements, I should be pained and should thereafter avoid the society of Smith, as that of a poor sportsman and an unappreciative friend.

I say, if we knew ; but the fact is, of course, that

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we both do know, down in the backs of our minds, just how uninteresting each of our respective subjects is to the other man. Only the knowledge hasn't been forced into the upper currents of consciousness by any overt act or utterance. Smith would be only momentarily surprised if I told him to shut up in the middle of one of his talks about tuning-in San Francisco. He would say to himself, after a minute or so : " Why, of course, I knew it all along. I knew his show of enthusiasm was all pretence. He hasn't brains enough to be interested in radio. No, no, he never fooled *me* ! " And I—well, I have told you how suspicious I am, at bottom, about Smith's alleged enthusiasm over my golf.

For we both *know* the truth, but it is a knowledge which we are able to ignore because we have never received official notice of the facts. Smith has not *told* me that he detests golf stories. I have not *told* Smith that I consider the radio the poorest subject of conversation in the world. So, although each may be fully aware of the other's feelings, each is entitled to act as if those feelings were the opposite of what they are, and were exactly what they seem. And we do so act, and we shall go on so acting until one of us blurts out the truth—about his own boredom ; whereupon the other will retaliate with the truth about his, and the mutual boredom, and the friendship which has fattened upon them, will both come to an end.

Don't tell me that if Smith knew I hated radio-boasting he wouldn't radio-boast in my presence. That's rubbish. You don't know Smith, and I do. Besides, the more I think of it, the more certainly I know that I *know* that Smith hates my golf talk ; but

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do I spare him? Not though I love him! I rub it into him the harder. Perhaps it's a species of Sadism. Anyhow, I should stop it if Smith protested, but so long as he does not protest I shall take full advantage of the assumption which he allows me to make, that golf stories are his mental meat and drink, and that mine are the best he ever tasted.

Much of the conventional conversation of modern society seems to me to be deliberately designed to foster these unwarrantable but comfortable assumptions. I have particularly in mind the common form of salutation among the Euro-American nations—the "How are you?" or "How-d'ye-do?" of casual acquaintances. It is absurd to maintain that this inquiry is the fruit of any real desire to learn about the health of the person addressed. Nobody is really interested in diseases, except the doctor, and his interest is professional. Deaths, actual or prospective, do, I admit, possess a certain interest, especially if the deceased or deceasing person be somebody of wealth or position or influence. The demise of a person of that class leaves the world a trifle less crowded for us and our relatives and our friends; there is promotion for somebody, a legacy for somebody else. A potentially fatal illness therefore derives a certain interest from its possible termination. To ask a dying man how he is is equivalent to asking him when he expects to die. But people with fatal illnesses are seldom to be met walking about the streets and exchanging how-d'ye-do's with their friends. The diseases that people talk about when they meet in the theatre or the church lobby or the department store are just the common ordinary discomforts which most of us hate

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to hear about. Indeed, I think I might say that all of us hate to hear about them, for the sole reason which induces some of us to put up with it cheerfully, is the expectation of talking about our own in return.

Yet we invariably issue this polite invitation to our friend to enjoy himself at our expense every time that we meet him after twenty-four hours of separation. And our friend reciprocates, and the exchange of morbid details begins. Some of us do our little best to render the invitation ineffective, by passing on rapidly to another subject more congenial to ourselves. "How are you, Smith? Grand day for golf, isn't it?" is my own precautionary method of combining politeness with self-preservation in the case of the friend whom I have already mentioned. And Smith, whose health is too good to be a matter of interest even to himself, counters with "Fine, old man, and how are you? Do you know, the static was terrible last night? I see it's supposed to have something to do with sunspots." But this device does not work with Mrs. Smith. That good lady, when addressed in precisely the same manner as her husband, puts the train back on the main track with firmness and promptitude. "It's very kind of you to ask about me," she begins, thus as it were officially accepting my very casual offer, countersigning it and handing it back to me as a completed contract, witnessed and sealed, by which I am obligated to listen to the narrative of her symptoms for the next fifteen minutes. "You are a fortunate man to be able to take an interest in golf" (that, you see, tears up my other offer of an alternative topic and drops it in the waste-basket), "but I always say to



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Mr. Smith that it is only the really healthy who can take an interest in games and radio and all that sort of thing. Ever since I had my appendix removed three years ago I have been——" etc.

Now it is unlikely that Mrs. Smith would embark on this tale if she had not received that formal but quite insincere invitation to do so which was contained in my conventional "How are you, Mrs. Smith?" And it would be far better for her if she did not embark upon it. The Smith family doctor, who is also mine, assures me that two-thirds of Mrs. Smith's ills are imaginary, and that the other third would be greatly lessened if she could keep her mind on more cheerful subjects. But she has a passionate and prideful interest in her own ill-health, wherein she resembles a vast number of other people. And I, to my shame, be it said, am utterly unable to restrain myself from giving her the conventional opening, although I know that in so doing I am both submitting myself to boredom and aiding the ravages of her diseases. I cannot withhold my tongue from that fatally easy speech, any more than I could stop her in the middle of her narrative by saying, "Perfect rot, Mrs. Smith! If you were cheerful and kept your mind on golf instead of gastritis you would be as healthy as I am."

* * * *

But that which I, as an individual, am powerless to do, could be done by the common action of society. Has not this particular pretence, of an interest in the state of health of our neighbour, gone a little too far? Is it for the general good that we should all go round

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actually inviting our fellow men and women to pour out upon us the symptomatology which should be reserved for their consultations with their physician? Our ancestors, who started this "How are you?" business, knew nothing of what we know about the effect of the mind on the body, and the destructive influence of morbid thoughts upon the physical resistance to disease. They thought, doubtless, that they were merely promoting a harmless pleasure in allowing one another to tell "how they were doing." Besides, their knowledge of what was going on was acquired almost entirely through conversation. With them there was always the possibility that their friend might really have developed a serious or fatal disease without their having heard about it. With us the ease of letter-writing, and the assiduous services of the personal column in the newspaper, have reduced that probability to zero. Further, these same ancestors were but ill supplied with the services of professional physicians, and amateur advice had its value. It would be inhuman to discourage the recounting of symptoms, when there was a chance that the hearer might be able to give advice or suggestions for dealing with them. I can readily imagine that in Pilgrim Father Massachusetts or even in Pepysian London a certain amount of discussion of illnesses among friends had its social value. But that value is vastly discounted to-day.

Why, then, should not modern society amend its conventions and declare it to be bad manners to talk about our diseases? We no longer exhibit our sores to the eye, like the beggars in Italy, but we go on exhibiting them to the imagination by word of

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mouth with a good deal of particularity and not a little pride. Yet it seems to me that the latter exhibition may be just as vulgar as the former. The time is opportune for declaring it so. This is the era of the young. Diseases are rather specially the prerogative of the elderly, or at least of those who can no longer be called young. But our society is to-day, to an extent that can seldom have been equalled in the past, ruled and managed by the definitely young ; and the young have few diseases and are not very proud of those they have. I am aware that my proposal may involve some additional hardship for the old, on whom the fashions and conventions of the era already bear more hardly, one suspects, than ever before. Some of them are going to have no interest in life left if we deprive them of the proud boast of having more or acuter aches and pains than anybody else in their particular society. But all reforms are hard on somebody, and perhaps if the elderly are not allowed to take pride in their diseases they will take more trouble to avoid or get rid of them. There is a suggestion of what may be done along these lines in the social decline of fatness. People have learned, in recent years, to go to a vast amount of trouble to avoid obesity ; why should not the same thing happen in the case of arterio-sclerosis and cirrhosis of the liver ? Why should a man be ashamed of being fat and proud of being gastric-ulcered ? Both are presumably the results of past indiscretions. (Toothache, too, is no longer a good conversational subject. To have a tooth ache is an admission that one has not been to one's dentist lately, and that is a social error.)

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This is why I urge the leaders of society to take action with a view to making the discussion of one's state of health—I will not say illegal, for we are slightly over-supplied with legal prohibitions at the moment—but at least ill-mannered and reprehensible. I cannot do anything about it myself. I am not a leader of society. I am a follower of it. I follow it at a respectful distance, near enough to permit me to study its many interesting qualities, but far enough away to make it clear that I do not belong to it. I conceive of the leaders as walking about the same distance ahead of the main body as I do behind. Viewed from the side-lines, we must collectively present much the same spectacle as a procession of a drum-major, a regiment with band, and a small boy following in the rear. But even the small boy may make useful suggestions as to the path that the procession should take.

When it becomes ill-mannered to talk about our own health it will clearly be ill-mannered also to ask our neighbour to talk about his. "How are you?" will cease to be the universal salutation, and we shall possibly fall back on "Hail!" or, what is, I suppose, its more modern equivalent, "Hello!" Children, who have excellent judgment in these fundamental matters (as might be expected of those who are still trailing clouds of glory which their elders have got rid of), instinctively employ salutations of this character, and learn only reluctantly and after much training to utter the, as it seems to them, absurd formulae of grown-up society. As for replying in any detail to the health inquiry when addressed to themselves, they never do it, and it requires the

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utmost persuasion on the part of parents and teachers to induce them to say even "Very well, thank you" (see A. A. Milne, "When We Were Very Young," *passim*. . . . Wonderful how a few bibliographical references dignify a scientific article like this, isn't it?). It would greatly simplify the process of education, and leave time which might be devoted to a really profitable study like psycho-analysis, if the course of instruction in "Very well, thank you" could be eliminated from the infant school curriculum.

I admit that there is a health reference even in the "Hail" which I have proposed as an alternative salutation, as also in the "Salve" which preceded it. But it is a mere pious aspiration. I do not think there is any objection to it. These words are the expression of a courteous hope that the addressee may be in good health—not an invitation to him to describe his bad health. And there are public as well as personal reasons for desiring him to be healthy. Admitting that I may have no real interest in the personal healthiness of my friend Smith or his wife (and I only admit it for the sake of argument, for they are likeable people, and I do really prefer that they should not suffer), the consideration still remains that every case of ill-health tends to diminish the good health of all the rest of the community. We are none of us well or ill to ourselves alone. Mrs. Smith's influenza may be imparted to my wife or to our cook or our neighbour's chauffeur (who sometimes drives us home). We have therefore the soundest of reasons for wishing Mrs. Smith to continue in good health, and I do not in the least mind telling her so whenever I meet her. Even the reader of this

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article is entitled to a similar expression of my good will. If he has read through to this stage of the article he must presumably have derived some pleasure from it, and will therefore be ready to read more articles bearing the same signature. It is consequently important to me that he should remain in good health, with perfect vision and unimpaired mentality. He is—you are, gentle reader—part of my intangible assets. And therefore, gentle reader, I quite sincerely and consistently wish you—"Fare-well."



HOW ARE YOUR AMENITIES ?

THE English are undeniably a resourceful race. They have been listening for some ten or twenty years now to the ever-louder volume of complaints from American tourists that England has no bathrooms, no steam heat and no ice ; and they have devised an answer. " Yes," they reply, " all that is true, but we have amenities, which are far better." And the American complainant is silent, because he is not sure what an amenity is, and has not the least idea what it would cost in Grand Rapids or Fall River.

All this talk about amenities—and it is a poor week when the *Nation and Athenæum* does not mention them at least three times—is quite new, and I believe it to be entirely defensive. The Englishman simply had to have something with which to shut up the Americans, and he invented—or revived—"amenities" for that purpose. I do not suggest that it is a new word. It is one, however, which the Puritans did not bring with them to this continent, and which has not come over to any marked extent in any subsequent importation of language. It is not in the vocabulary of the North American business man, the society matron, the university youth or the Farm Women's Circle. Editorial writers avoid it, and it is not to be found in the impromptu utterances of Mr. Will Rogers. That it exists in a special sense and in a limited area of the Southern States appears to be

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suggested by the fact that a South Carolina colonel once asked me if I would join him in a "morning amenity," by which he meant a mint julep ; but obviously this has little to do with the word as now employed in England, except that there is a suggestion of enjoyment running through both usages.

I was, I think, one of the first to detect the rise of "amenities" to a prominent position in English conversation and English literature, and I have given much study to the question of the origin of the amenity, its habits, behaviour, habitat, and colouring. It has not been easy. The amenity is a shy bird. Like the nightingale, one hears a great deal about it, but when you want to make a phonograph record of it you will have no end of a job to track it to its lair. Perhaps I should not have said "like the nightingale," for the nightingale is itself an amenity, one of the liveliest and noisiest to be found in England, and one about which the amenity experts are most enthusiastic. The lark is another. The motor-horn is not. Nor, apparently, is a phonograph record of a lark or a nightingale, no matter how perfect a reproduction it may be. Just why the song of a lark in its natural and original state should be an amenity, while the song of a lark canned and reproduced in a Victrola is a nuisance, is one of those questions which make amenity-hunting such a fascinating game. There is, however, this obvious point to be considered : The song of the lark in its natural state cannot be exported from England ; the American visitor cannot take it away with him and enjoy it at home along with his bathroom, his steam heat and his ice ; but the canned lark song can be transported anywhere. It follows that canned lark song cannot be an amenity.

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All this is bringing us steadily nearer to the essence of the amenity. In fact, if we go on this way we shall soon be able to recognise the creature whether on the wing, on the hoof or on the market. The canned lark song is an almost ideal example of that which is not an amenity. For in addition to being exportable, it is capable of very easy and very extensive reproduction. And an amenity must be something which can only be reproduced at a tremendous cost in time and labour, and especially in "craftsmanship," while the best amenities are those which can never be reproduced at all. Upon the strength of these considerations it has been seriously maintained, by a number of amenity experts, that a London fog is an amenity ; but that view is far from being universally accepted. True, a London fog cannot be exported. True, it cannot be reproduced, in America or anywhere else ; that is to say, it cannot be reproduced upon anything like the same scale, though I understand that a roomful of it can be manufactured at a cost of about thirty cents, and flavoured to taste. It has been held for these reasons that a London fog is entitled to the protection of the Historical Monuments Society, and that any steps to exterminate or mitigate it should be prohibited. I am not prepared to say that this view is wrong ; but it is a minority opinion ; the best amenity experts are against it, and there is as yet no organised effort for the Conservation of Atmospheric Opacity.

These best experts point to the Latin derivation of the word amenity (not the safest of arguments, by the way), and claim that the title must not be applied to anything which has not at least some measure of the pleasant about it ; and they deny that there is

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anything pleasant about a London fog. It may be ancient (though that is doubtful, since it can hardly go further back than the general introduction of coal fires), and it may be picturesque, but pleasant it is not. The song of the lark and that of the nightingale are pleasant, they are unexportable, the supply of them is limited and cannot readily be increased, and the American who wants them has got to give up his bathrooms and his ice and come over and listen to them on their native soil, and he will have some trouble in finding them even there. When he comes he will find other amenities, all of them subject to the same limitations. He will find charming views from accessible public places, ancient buildings of picturesque appearance or romantic associations open to his inspection, enjoyable mountain-tops and woodlands and stretches of sea-coast free for his visitation ; and he will find vigorous societies and periodicals and eminent literary persons and Parliamentary committees all embattled for their preservation. All in order that when he complains about the bathrooms and the steam heat and the ice the English may be able to answer him, not only now but for all time to come, " Yes, but we have amenities."

The only thing that will break down this answer, that will save the visitor from the North American continent from hanging his head in shame when the word amenity is breathed in his ear or shouted in his motor-car window, will be the development of a supply of amenities in North America itself, alongside of the bathrooms and the radiators. This, I believe, will come, but it is bound to be a slow business, and at present there is little sign of even a beginning of

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it. We are not yet solicitous, upon this continent, about things which merely minister to the general enjoyment, and which do nothing to keep us either clean or physically comfortable or moral or efficient. We are much concerned about things that we hope will keep the community healthy. We are tremendously strong on hospitals, and on inspecting food, and on cleaning the school children's teeth, and providing them with playgrounds (not because they enjoy play, but because we consider play to be good for them). We are desperately addicted to imposing education upon our young people, not because it will enable them to enjoy life (for the kind of education that we give them seldom produces that effect), but because it will enable them to produce or sell more goods, and thus to make more money. We spend enormous sums on public libraries, thinking that the citizens will use them for purely educational purposes ; and when they insist on using them for pleasure we are distressed and disappointed. We build sumptuous art galleries, but we fill them with the kind of pictures which we think will do the common people good, and which incidentally it will take most of them five years of study to learn to understand. But about the pure and aesthetic and noble enjoyments that almost anybody can obtain from the common beauties of the countryside and the simple craftsmanship of ancient buildings we care nothing at all. We build costly churches and erect magnificent organs in them, and lock up the whole thing except for four hours on Sunday, during which it is devoted to a more or less lugubrious demonstration of our decent respect for the Almighty. We build large halls, in which lecturers can lecture

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on Finland and the League, and Fundamentalism, and the English Landscape Artists (with lantern views), and veteran opera singers can sing ballads to an audience at three dollars a seat and up ; but we do not use them to provide cheap and popular orchestral or choral music for the larger public. And if by chance there should happen to be in the vicinity of one of our large cities a really sightly piece of landscape with a fine old farmhouse on it, we gather together a few rich men and buy it for a golf club, of which non-members may contemplate the iron gateway and no more. No, we have not bothered much as yet about the aesthetic pleasures of the great public. If they haven't money enough to join a golf club or buy three-dollar seats, what right have they to aesthetic pleasures, anyhow ? We educate them, we hospitalise them, we give them lectures, we inspect their teeth, we inspect their milk, we inspect their minds and their morals ; what more do they want ?

Well, most of them want a good deal, but are not quite sure what it is. We have so completely accustomed them to wanting nothing except what can be bought for cash, that when they find themselves wanting something else, such as scenery, they don't understand what is going on in their insides and think they must be ill. The desire for amenities is natural and deep-seated in the human soul, but on this continent it has been suppressed. It is natural that a man should want the city that he lives in to be beautiful ; but we have taught our people that that is impossible. It is natural that a man should want the country round about him to contain places from which he can see Nature in her kindest and

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gentlest, or perhaps her grandest, moods ; but we have taught that if there are any such places it is fitting and proper that they should be monopolised by the rich. It is natural that a man should like to pass, as he goes to his business, two or three old buildings that will stir his mind, when he is so inclined, to a sense of the romance of the past, and the colourful lives of those who dwelt in his place before him ; but we have taught that all such things should be torn down as soon as they interfere with progress and their sites become valuable. In a word, we have taught our people that amenities are not a thing that North America need or can bother about. If you want 'em, go to Europe for 'em, but don't expect to get bathrooms or steam heat along with 'em. You'll soon come back to the bathrooms !

The English tell us (in self-defence, it is true) that amenities are better than bathrooms, and a good view from a hilltop is more to be chosen than much ice-water. And what I want to know is, why we can't have both.



THE DEFORESTATION OF CANADIAN POETRY

I HAVE recently been reading a large quantity of Canadian poetry. I do this every now and again, either because I am feeling strong and adventurous and able to face anything, or because somebody is paying me to read some in order to write reviews about it. I am quite aware that it is not necessary to read poetry in order to write reviews about it, but personally I find it easier. I have a poor imagination, and I can never out of my own head think of anything quite so bad as the things one can find by reading the stuff, nor for that matter anything quite so good as the things one does occasionally find in the same stuff. Reviewing books without reading them has always seemed to me to be something like playing bridge without looking at your hand. I know players who play just as good a game when they don't look at their hand as when they do ; but it has always seemed to me that looking at it made the business more interesting. And book reviewing, like bridge, needs all you can get to make it interesting.

I have, therefore, as aforesaid, been reading a lot of Canadian poetry recently, and moreover it was recent Canadian poetry. And the idea was forced upon me that something needs to be done about it, if the tree and lake and wild-animal and great-open-

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space end of Canadian poetry is not to disappear from the output of the present generation of poets.

Time was, when a Canadian poet did not think he was doing justice to his Canadian muse unless two-thirds of his poems were highly descriptive accounts full of atmospheric detail, of lakes in the Algonquin Park or Laurentian regions, with thick forests running down to the water's edge and frogs croaking all over them and loons emitting their special form of vocal lunacy, and either a pretty girl of the present, or the memory of a pretty girl of the past, or the dim hope of some pretty girl in the future, to lend what the landscape artist calls human interest. Human interest, in modern poetry, appears to mean something you can kiss.

In those good old days almost any Canadian poet might have been supposed, from the character of his work, to be an employee of the Commission of Conservation, and several of them actually were in the Department of Indian Affairs, to say nothing of the Geological Survey, the Natural Resources Intelligence Service of the Department of the Interior, or the Animal Husbandry Division of the Experimental Farms Branch of the Department of Agriculture. Their bodies lived in Ottawa or Toronto, but their souls were heading up towards the North Pole. This kind of poet is now almost extinct. The modern generation of poets keeps both its soul and body as near as possible to the Chateau Frontenac, the Chateau Laurier or the Windsor Hotel. If you think of them as having any other employment (and if you have any sense you know that they must have some other employment) than that of writing poetry, the

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job that immediately suggests itself as most closely corresponding to their poems is that of press agent for the Montreal Tramways Company or assistant advertising manager for Eaton's store.

For the fact is that Canadian poetry is becoming terribly urbanised, and the farm and the forest and the frog marsh and the fish pond are no longer getting a fair show in Canadian literature. Look at the trees in this recent Canadian poetry. I doubt if there are three among our younger Canadian poets who could tell a hemlock from a hickory, and I know several personally who are as proud as they can be because they can tell an aspen by the way it rustles in the wind. A tree, to these people, is just something that sticks up out of the ground and grows rather higher than an ordinary house and not quite so high as a skyscraper, and is left along the sides of residential streets so as to afford a pleasing contrast with the telephone poles whose lower branches are much shorter.

One of the best and quite the most heart-breaking of the poems that I have read in this recent batch has its scene laid entirely in a basement cafeteria. Another has to do with an electric light power-house, while still a third deals with the romance and tragedy of an automatic telephone exchange. They all betray the characteristic attitude of the city dweller towards the country and the wild—an attitude which may be summed up in the observation of a city-dwelling friend of mine that there is lots of room there to park your car but, nothing to do after you have parked it.

The natural objects that attract the attention of

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these young poets of ours are the kind of natural objects that you can readily come across in cities. A shaft of sunlight falling on a basket of oranges in a Hellenic fruit store inspires them to paeans of delight about roundness and yellowness and the presumably romantic aspect of an orange grove in California—about which they can easily rhapsodise because they have never seen one. (I am informed by those who have seen them that a Californian orange grove has about the same kind of natural beauty as a cribbage board, only on a slightly larger scale.) A trolley-car with forty or fifty people hanging on to the entry platform stirs them to a Hymn to Democracy. The klaxon and the saxophone are to them what the monotonous boom of the bull-frog and the distant call of the impassioned moose (the animal, not the fraternal society) were to their poetical ancestors. Their idea of wild natural scenery is the putting-green of the suburban golf club ; and they get lonely wherever there are less than a thousand people to the square mile.

I don't know how our poetry got that way, but I suppose it is a natural reaction from a diet that ran too exclusively to loons and bull-frogs and jack-pine forests. Poets, like other fashionable people, are chiefly concerned to appear different from the generation immediately preceding them. I don't know what is to be done about it. Perhaps it will have to take its course. A poet has always got to be discovering something ; he cannot get along with what the poets of ten or twenty years before discovered. Just now most of our poets are busy discovering the city, and the factory, and the railway freight yards,

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and the cement plants and the abattoirs. Where Drummond wrote about the voyageur they are busy writing about the traffic cop. It is in its way a good thing. Most of us would never have seen the loveliness of a traffic cop if the poets didn't tell us about it. Personally, I am like the man in Wordsworth : A p'liceman by the traffic's brim a simple p'liceman was to him, and nothing more ; and to me likewise. But now that I have read a lot of these poems the sight of a white glove thrills me with ecstasy, and the sound of a whistle makes my heart accelerate just as it does a taxicab.

All the same, if only for the sake of the rising generation, I hope that we shall get back to some of the good old poetry about the woods and the streams and the lakes and the creatures that live in them, and would be horrified if they ever found themselves anywhere near the King Edward Hotel. There was a restfulness about that poetry that the present stuff lacks. It is not merely that it was written in rhyme and metre—a kind of metre that suggested the sway of the tall tree-tops in the wind, and a kind of rhyme that was almost a picture of the way in which the reflection in the lake answers the picture of the woods upon its banks. This new city poetry is just about as restless and irregular as the life that it deals with. It is mostly written in free verse, which has a rhythm all its own and closely resembling that of the honking of the auto-horns in a crowded thoroughfare at five in the evening ; that is to say, it rises and falls, but nobody on earth can tell when it is going to rise or fall or what it rises and falls for. But that is not the only reason for its lack of restfulness. It is too far

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away from the fundamental things of life—from soft earth, and smell of pine needles, and long shadows between tree trunks, and little fluted calls of shy birds, and ripples tinkling along the shore. Books in running brooks, yes ; but the modern poet's running brook is the stream made in the gutter by the big water-carts flushing off the asphalt pavement !

And the tough part of it is that this city poetry is not and cannot ever be in the slightest degree Canadian. For cities—new, young, North American cities at any rate—are all exactly alike as to their fundamentals. A poem about the drains or the abattoirs in Montreal is in nowise different from a poem about the drains or the abattoirs in Chicago. But the Canadian woods are different from anybody else's woods, and the Canadian woods poetry was different. Back to the woods, ye Muse of Canada—back to the woods !





US AMPHIBIOUS CANADIANS

CANADIANS are the most aquatic people in the world. I say this without fear of contradiction. The Venetians, who cannot get out of either their front or back door without stepping into a boat, have nothing on us. The Hawaiians, who sleep at the water's edge in order to be able to roll into the surf at the sound of the rising-bell, may have certain climatic advantages in respect of all-the-year-round open-air bathing, but that is all. For perfervid, passionate addiction to water—as an element, not as a beverage—the Canadian is far beyond their paltry rivalry.

For consider our habits, and especially our habitats.

All Canadians live in one place in summer and in another place in winter. This enables them to consume the two or three days of spring and autumn respectively in moving from one habitat to the other.

Now the winter or business residence of Canadians is always situated on the shores of a considerable body of water, or at least on a waterway of some importance. The implacable hand of destiny has decreed that all Canadian cities shall be sea, lake or river ports. The inhabitant of Toronto snuffs the air of a forty-mile-wide lake; the inhabitant of Montreal gazes out over one of the world's greatest navigable streams,

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and is indeed actually surrounded on all sides by running water. The inhabitant of Ottawa is at a regular confluence of great waters. The inhabitant of Hamilton has his Bay, and maintains that it is one of the seven wonders of the world. And so on through every Canadian city without exception.

In summer these waterside dwellers hie them elsewhere in search of change of scene. Half of them go down to the seaside, and spend most of their time getting themselves wet and drying themselves again. The other half go inland.

At first sight it might be supposed that there is nothing aquatic about the tastes of this second half. But wait.

Where do they go ?

Ask any non-seashore-going Canadian where he is going when the summer migration begins, and he will answer without a moment's hesitation : " To the Lake," or " To the Beach," or " To the Bay."

In a few instances he may say merely " To the Mountains," and put you off the scent for a moment. But not for long. Riposte with the query : " What part of the Mountains ? " and he will come back with " Oh, up by the Lake. You know ! "

For the plain fact is that the Canadian will not summer anywhere except beside a lake. It does not matter much how large the lake is, nor how clean, nor what sort of odours emanate from it. A lake is a lake. The fish may have been all fished out years and years ago. The water may have gone down and down, as a result of the denudation of the surrounding forest, until acres of ill-smelling morass separate the settlement from its water-frontage. It does not matter how far it is from the railway station. In fact,

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the typical Canadian is rather proud of having to go fifteen miles into the backwoods with all his impedimenta after leaving his train ; especially when the only train back into town leaves at 5.30 in the morning, and it is therefore necessary to rise at two in order to get Jack McMullen or Jean Baptiste to hitch up the rig and drive into the station. It gives a man status to be able to tell his business associates that he was up at two that morning in order to come in from his week-end with the family in the Laurentians or Muskoka. He boasts about the wonderful air that blows across the lake at two in the morning, and the superb colours of the sunrise across the mountains, and the constant splash-plash of the leaping fish. It sounds good, and nobody is likely to contradict him. But to get the real facts you would have to ask Jean Baptiste and Jack McMullen, and they would tell you that he spent the whole drive in a comatose condition due to the untimely interruption of his sleep, and that his only wakeful moments were devoted to damning the lake, and the fish, and the sunrise, and the breeze, and the railway, and the horse (or the motor), and himself for being such an infernal fool as to live in such a hopeless place.

I have mentioned that it does not matter how large the lake is. This brings us to another peculiar characteristic of the mind of the Canadian lake-dweller. Merely to dwell alongside a lake is good, but it is not everything. The true ideal of summer residence is to OWN a lake, so that you may dwell by it and nobody else can. This does not imply any selfishness or lack of neighbourliness on the part of the lake-dweller ; on the contrary, the man who

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owns his lake will spend hundreds of dollars of money and months of time taking everybody he knows up to his lake and feeding them every luxury that the express companies will ship to him from the city. It is not that he is unwilling to share the use of his lake, or the fish in his lake, or the summer breezes off his lake, or the music of the frogs in his lake, or the iron-tinctured drinking water of his lake, or anything else that is therein. What he wants is to be able to walk all round the blessed thing and say to himself: "This is mine. If I liked I could drain it dry and nobody could stop me."

The other day I met a real-estate agent who had discovered this characteristic of the Canadian lake-dweller and was preparing to put it to commercial use. I predict that by the end of next summer, if there is enough water in his part of the Laurentians, he will be a millionaire. His scheme was to buy a farm—a pretty high, dry farm, with lots of rocks and picturesqueness—cut it up into lots about three or four times the size of a city lot, build a two-room bungalow in one corner and a boathouse in the other, and then dig a lake on each lot. He had it all figured out that if these lakes were bedded with concrete they would not require to be filled more than once a year, in spring, just before the family came up for the summer. Every lot was to have its own lake, with no possibility of anybody else using it. Each lake was to have a large sign fronting the road: "Private; this lake reserved." The lakes were to be of varying depths, from those which would refuse to drown an infant of two years to the size which could if necessary be used to drown a

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mother-in-law or an unwelcome guest ; so that all tastes would be catered for.

This desire for the private and exclusive possession of one's own personal lake has just precisely one justification. It is the only way of avoiding the violent feuds and animosities which are inevitable between two households dwelling upon the shores of the same body of inland water. Lakes, in Canada at any rate (I have not experimented with those which Wordsworth and Coleridge used to use for purposes of circumambulation, nor with those which Alpine sportsmen employ for the bottom end of their ski-runs), have extraordinary powers of conveying sound. A calm and casual domestic utterance, nay, even a confidential whisper, emitted on the balcony of a cottage anywhere near the water-line is heard like the proclamations of a professional broadcaster on every other veranda at every other corner of the lake. Now it is quite impossible to live in the country, in close proximity to another cottage full of lake-dwellers and about ten miles away from anybody else, without occasionally experiencing an irresistible desire to tell the members of one's own family exactly what one thinks of the manners and behaviour of one's neighbours. Yet to do so is absolutely fatal. Every word of what one says rolls around the lake, gathering volume and intensity as it goes, until Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Robinson are severally and collectively aware of just what you and your wife think of Mrs. Jones's bathing suit, Mrs. Smith's husband's singing voice, and the manners and language of Mrs. Robinson's children. These circumstances make but little for peace and amity among lake-dwellers ; and I suspect that the

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apparent lack of crimes of violence in these lake districts is merely due to the fact that it is easier and safer to wait until one's neighbours have returned to the city and to do away with them there.

The waters of the lake, of course, perform innumerable and very important functions in the life of the lakeside community. They attract and maintain the supply of mosquitoes, black flies and other stimulating insects without which country life in the early part of the summer is so flat and uninteresting. They sustain large numbers of leaky flat-bottomed boats, which occupy the time of the younger members in bailing and rowing in about equal proportions. They afford admirable receptacles for the empty tin cans in which the health-sustaining rural diet of the lake-dwellers is brought to them from the city. At morning and at evening they evolve nice rich, damp mists which take all the crispness out of the biscuits and all the curl out of the latest city-made permanent wave. In fact, the lake is undeniably a very useful accessory of summer residence. There are people who even drink it. There are others, more numerous, who feel very strongly that it is not fit to drink, but can be induced to use it for purposes of dilution when the soda-water supply has given out.





THE OLD BACK GARDEN

IS the back garden a back number ?
When I was a boy in Toronto, which was longer ago than I care to compute, and even when I was a young man in Toronto, which was not quite so long ago, there were plenty of back gardens. Most of the time I had one myself. I mean my parents had one, but I was the person that used it—I and my brothers and sisters and a few cousins and the neighbours' children and dogs.

And now that I look around among my acquaintances I can't think of a single one who has such a thing.

Mind, I don't mean all-the-way-round-the-house gardens. There are plenty of those, in these days of detached and semi-detached houses. They are fine, for parents and gardeners, and tea-parties on the

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lawn, and raising tulips and peonies. But they're absolutely useless for children. You can't play in them ; it discourages the tulips and interferes with the tea-parties.

The old back garden existed for playing in, and for hardly anything else, except that the wash was hung out to dry there on Mondays and Tuesdays, and there were lilac trees at the far end where the garbage cans were kept, close to the door into the lane. When the wash was out it was inadvisable to play, but at other times the place cried aloud to be played in.

It had a board fence all round it ; that is to say, round three sides of it. The fourth side was the kitchen end of the house. In my early days there was a shed at the back, which according to the tradition handed down by the children of the very oldest residents in the street had once been used for storing firewood. That was before the basement of the house was converted into a cellar and provided with a furnace and a hole in the wall through which the coal could be shot. In my day the shed was about forty times too large for all the uses that were made of it, which consisted in storing the lawn mower and the garden rake and the broken flower pots and the double windows and the old shingles off the roof. Indeed, before my day came to an end most of the sheds either fell down or blew down or were taken down, and grass grew up where they had been, and there was that much more place to play.

It was, as I remember it, a jolly good place to play. It was not quite long enough ; a pitched ball occasionally broke a window in one's own or a neighbour's house. But that after all is part of the

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excitement of playing. It happens occasionally now, when play seems to go on chiefly in the front street, and the windows that get broken now are front windows and much more expensive. It was a bit narrow for tennis, especially if some silly elder had tried to grow things in beds along the sides. And it was a little too close to the house, making it easy for parents to call one in.

But it was one's own ground, and that was something. There was a mild amount of privacy about it. You didn't have to let the whole streetful of kids into your game. Democracy is a beautiful thing, but even kids get the idea quite early that it may be overdone.

If you were in your own garden you could run your own game. If you didn't like the way that Susie Jones interpreted the rules, you could send Susie home to the Joneses. You could produce a nice new baseball with no risk of its being confiscated by Henry Smith, who was three inches taller than you were.

You could run into the house for a drink of water whenever you got thirsty, and if the cook (there were cooks in those days) was feeling amiable you might get it flavoured with raspberry vinegar, and accompanied by a cookie. On the twenty-fourth of May you could, and did, let off fireworks in it (that had something to do with the gradual disappearance of the sheds), and on other festal days in summer you could serve an alfresco repast of ice-cream frozen by your own exertions in the big freezer in the "summer kitchen." It was a good place.

I stayed for a short time recently in an old Toronto

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house that used to have one of these back gardens. It was completely ruined. On the adjoining lot to one side somebody had converted the house into apartments, building right out to the lane, with a sort of indentation or embrasure from which four stories of bathroom, bedroom and kitchen windows looked on to what would have been the garden of the house where I was staying, if it had still been there.

But my friend who owned the house also owned a very long car, and had built himself at the lane end of the garden a palatial garage, with a little workshop where he does his tinkering, and a shower-bath and a place for waving dumb-bells and Indian clubs. This had taken about half of the old garden. From the house end there had grown out a thing consisting of brickwork and terra-cotta and glass, which he sometimes called a conservatory and sometimes a sun-room—it depended on whether it had three plants in it or only one. This had taken up two-thirds of what was left. Between these two structures was some five feet of moth-eaten grass, which smelt of gasoline and oil. The garden was gone. What was left was about as much use to a healthy child (my friend has two) as a canoe to an elephant.

My friend's children do not play in the garden. So far as I can make out, none of the children of any of my friends play in gardens. They play in playgrounds attached to their schools, at specified hours. They play in the streets at unspecified hours, thereby making life exciting for motorists and dangerous for themselves. But, as compared with the children of my young days, they hardly play at all. Then, of course, we had no movies, and no story-telling rooms

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in the public libraries, and no radio, and no motor-cars, and none of our parents ever dreamed of teaching us golf at the age of nine. I suppose the truth of it is that we played in the back garden because we had nothing else to do. I suppose we were really very 'badly off' as compared with our modern successors. Fortunately we didn't know it.

A town-planning friend of mine, who has undertaken to make over our modern civilisation, tells me that these old-fashioned deep individual lots in which the back gardens flourished are all wrong and are not a proper way of laying out a city block. He is laying out his blocks as a sort of community unit, with the houses dotted here and there in the block so as to get the largest possible amount of sunlight, and with no ground to speak of attached to the individual house, but a big playground for all the kiddies of the block at one end and a big recreation ground for tennis and skating for the elders at the other end.

It looks very lovely, and he says it is bound to come. I suppose it will. But I know that if I were a child and lived in one of my friend's town-planning blocks and had to play in his community playground, there would infallibly be some other boy or girl in that block whom I detested and didn't want to play with, and he or she would always be out there making the playground hideous. I am built that way. Even at my present advanced age I don't like playing on the same golf links with objectionable adults, although an objectionable adult (thanks to the restraints of etiquette) is far less objectionable than an objectionable child. If I were a child to-day, of course, I should not remember anything about these old

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wood-fenced back gardens ; but I just know that if my ancestors told me about them I should wish I had lived in those happy days.

There was another thing about the games we played in those old backyards, as compared with the over-organised amusements of the modern child. We invented them ourselves. We ran them ourselves. We made the paraphernalia ourselves—except for a few rubber balls and a bat or two. Nobody in my part of Toronto had a play-Indian costume in those days, but we played better Indian with the old discarded dining-room table-cloth and a few feathers from a neighbour's hen-house than anybody plays now with all the manufactured costumes and scenery. Now, when the youngster puts on the expensive Indian outfit and starts to try to play Indian, out comes the female parent, and summons the corresponding female parent from the next house and says, "Isn't Willie too cute in his Indian clothes?" and the thing has ceased being a game and become a show performed for the benefit of a lot of silly grown-ups who don't really know an Indian from a load of hay. In the old backyard all the notice that was ever taken of us was, "Willie, if you tear that old table-cloth I'll give you the spanking of your life."

I am sorry the old back garden is gone. Of course, we youngsters paid a price for it. We had to keep the grass cut (we had to keep it watered, too, but that was in the nature of fun). Most of us had to carry the ashes up from the furnace and across the back garden to the lane gate. Some of us, greatly tyrannised, had to dig flower beds and plant seeds and trim young geraniums, which not only caused labour

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but interfered with the usefulness of the garden as a playground. No child of my acquaintance is called on for any of these degrading tasks to-day ; they are performed by professionals, or you live in an apartment house and they are not performed at all. But it was worth the price and more.

In the dazzling sunlight of a Toronto May afternoon, or the welcome coolness of a June evening, when one hadn't even the money to hire a canoe on the Humber, the old back garden looked a good deal like elysium. Well, it is gone. The board fence has rotted away, and it isn't good style to put up a new one. The new houses have cute little iron fences or no fences at all, and peony and tulip beds all over everywhere. If any child were adventurous enough to start to play in these peony gardens some adult would promptly say, " Give those noisy little brats a dollar and tell them to go to the movies."

But we are breeding wonderful peonies.



ON TEACHING WHAT IS NOT KNOWN

THERE is hardly anything now that schools and colleges will not undertake to teach, if they can induce or compel anybody to be taught it. This is because teachers have discovered that the larger the number of subjects taught in the schools, the larger becomes the number of specialist teachers required to teach them. More subjects, more jobs. In the early days of education it was not so. Even with the instruction limited to the three R's and a smattering of Latin, there were still more teaching jobs than there were teachers; and additional subjects, instead of meaning additional jobs for additional teachers, meant more work for the existing teachers, without any increase of pay. The educational profession in those days was rigidly set against any extension of the range of subject-matter in the schools and colleges. There is undoubtedly a slight tendency in the human race to believe in that which is economically advantageous to us. Educationists are noble fellows, but fortunately they are still human.

My own schooldays occurred fairly near the beginning of the great change. Part of the educationists had gone over to the expansionist movement and part of them had not; and there was

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bitter hatred between them. School children were beginning to be taught Civics ; they could no longer write a decent hand, but they could tell you how the members of the Senate are appointed and what are the functions of the Provincial Board of Health. Chemistry had already crept into the curriculum ; and while the children could no longer recognise a gerundival construction at sight, they could detect quite a number of unpleasant compounds by their smell or their explosive behaviour. The Latin teachers looked down upon the Stinks teachers as upstarts and intruders ; to-day the Stinks teachers look down upon the Latin teachers (if they can find any to look down upon) as belated survivors of a barbarous age.

There used to be a delicate aroma of antiquity about all the subjects taught in school when I was a boy, with the exception, of course, of the undignified newcomers like Civics and Stinks. Latin was the Latin of Cicero, taught after the manner of Oxford in the eighteenth century. Geometry was the Geometry of a Greek gentleman named Euclid. The other mathematical subjects were taught much as they had been taught by the Arabs about the time of Dante. There was some history of England, but it stopped abruptly at the Napoleonic wars. Some history of Canada had been recently introduced, with a good deal of difficulty on account of its terribly modern date. It also ended about the time of the War of 1812. It will be perceived that this education left a slight hiatus of a century or so between the world as expounded to scholars in school and the world in which they found themselves on emerging

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from its portals. Some of us, I believe, never even suspected that the two were actually the same world. We conceived of the matters about which we learned in school as relating to some fantastic universe invented by schoolmasters solely to provide work for schoolboys, and peopled with wholly imaginary persons such as Balbus, who built a wall, Romulus and Remus, who founded Rome, Julius Caesar, who divided Gaul, and Lord Nelson, who looked through telescopes with his blind eye and did extraordinary things with little flags. Others of us eventually realised the historical continuity of the cosmos and vaguely hoped that we should in time pick up, from our parents and friends and our casual reading, some idea how the world of Napoleon and Nelson got itself changed into the obviously very different world of Lord Salisbury and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and William McKinley.

I used to think that it would have been kinder if our educationists had brought us up a little further towards Sir Wilfrid Laurier and that Twentieth Century which seemed such a long way from the Eighteenth ; and I used to wonder also why they never thought of doing it. I know now. They were trying to preserve education in the state in which it had been in the grand old days when the playing-fields of Eton won the Battle of Waterloo. The history of the nineteenth century had not been taught at Eton in those days, for obvious reasons. It was not therefore to be taught in Canada in the days of Laurier. The little Etonians got along very well without Civics, for most of them acquired that subject at first hand by entering Parliament *via* a

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pocket borough at the age of twenty-one ; therefore, Civics were unnecessary for a Canadian schoolboy. It was a thoroughly logical and perfectly comprehensible attitude, and I have the highest respect for the educationists who maintained it.

But when the great change took place, and educationists began to look for more subjects to introduce instead of trying desperately to keep all new subjects out, they fell, among other things, upon the History of Our Own Time. Nowadays, so far as I can gather, the educated child (whose writing has become totally illegible, and who cannot add without a machine, and who thinks that the subjunctive mood is the exclusive property of the poets) is fully instructed in the history of the world up to at least the last-but-one change of Government in France. His literary acquaintance has been similarly modernised. He knows little about Byron, but much about E. Barrington. Milton has dropped out of his curriculum, to be replaced by Masfield, and Saint-Beuve has given way to Sandburg. The student emerges from school into a world about which he has received quite a large amount of instruction from his pedagogues.

Or has he? For certain very difficult and disturbing questions are beginning to arise about this education in the up to date. There are grave difficulties about teaching the history of anything—be it a battle, a literary movement, a scientific theory or an economic revolution—which occurred less than one hundred years ago. The Muse of History is a long-sighted lady, but her vision is ill-adapted to dealing with phenomena that are too close at hand.

ON TEACHING WHAT IS NOT KNOWN

History cannot teach events, for the kind of events with which it has to deal are too complex and too largely concealed from human knowledge. All it can teach is acceptable theories about events. And the difficulty of formulating an acceptable theory about any event increases in geometrical ratio with the nearness of the event to our own time. History knows more about the wars of Tiglath-Pileser the Second than she does about the Great Americo-German War of 1917. Similarly, literary history knows more about the intellectual methods and artistic values of Tennyson and Tupper than she does about those of James Joyce and Gertrude Stein. The schoolmasters are undertaking to teach acceptable theories of wars and poets and economic movements and social doctrines about which no acceptable theories exist ; and they are quite inevitably getting into all sorts of trouble in the process of doing it.

Educationists have always had a sublime faith in the unlimited capabilities of their profession. If the educationists of my own day omitted to teach me anything about Gladstonian Home Rule, it was not because they did not consider themselves competent to do so ; it was merely because Gladstonian Home Rule was not part of the traditional subject-matter of the education of an Eton schoolboy in the eighteenth century. Yet on the whole I am glad that they did not undertake to teach me that subject. I think it is better that I should have been left to form my own opinions of it in maturer years. An Acceptable Theory of Gladstonian Home Rule, formulated by the educational authorities of Ontario in the 'nineties, might not have been the best possible

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foundation for a sound working view of the same subject in the twentieth century. As for any Acceptable Theory of the Great War that can be formulated by any educational authority whatever in this year of grace, it must have just about as much permanency as this year's fashions in ladies' hats. To teach it to children in school, on the same authority as we teach them that two and two are four and that slavery is an evil, seems to me to be an outrage on their tender minds. I would as soon teach them an Acceptable Theory about Einstein or Matisse.

It is not so much that I am afraid of the children imbibing erroneous ideas about the Great War—or let us rather say, ideas which they will later have to change—or any other subject of Recent History. It is astonishing how easily children shed the ideas artificially imparted to them in school, if they happen to come into conflict with those which they find actuating the world around them when they emerge. It is always safe to say that damage to the children is the least important and the least enduring of all the evils which may result from a mistake on the part of the educational authority. What I am afraid of is unseemly squabbles among the educationists themselves, leading to degrading of the science of education and an undermining of the public's regard for it. So long as the educationists stick to subjects that have been properly formulated, all they have to worry about is the best way to teach them, which is their professional business and will be left to them. But when they insist on teaching subjects that have never been properly formulated, they are sure to quarrel among themselves, not only on the professional

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question of how to teach them, but on the non-professional question of what to teach. And then the amateurs will wade in. After all, the post of Superintendent of Schools or even Minister of Education gives no man a right to pose as an authority on what should be taught about the Great War ; on that subject the Mayor of Chicago has as much right to his views as the Superintendent, and the Superintendent as the crossing-sweeper. Far away from the Chicago city hall, in scores of garrets and government offices and garrison quarters all over the world, a few hundred men are slowly piecing out the picture which, about 1977, will become the Accepted Theory about the Great War and will remain so until a fresh generation decides upon furbishing up a new one. The children now going through the schools will largely have the job of determining what that Acceptable Theory of 1977 is to be. It would be much better for them if the schools, and still more the colleges, would teach them the art of drawing conclusions from evidence, than if they insist on providing them with a ready-made picture, suitable for the infant mind, of the Great War, as certain influential groups of the present day like to believe that it happened. But the Art of Finding Out Truth for Oneself seems to be the one thing that the present-day educationists do not want to teach. They may feel—perhaps rightly—that one who has once acquired that art is not likely to come around clamouring for instruction in other subjects.

HOLIDAYS LTD.

OUR ancestors were better off then we in many ways. Take the matter of holidays. In the first place, they did not have nearly so many of them to worry about. In the second place, there was a definite programme of things to do attached to most of them, so they did not have to worry about them at all.

A holiday in those good old days was a day specially devoted to some particular and traditional kind of celebration. It was a day for dancing around a maypole, or for decorating and undecorating a Christmas-tree, or for going out in masquerade and firing off crackers or singing ribald songs or lifting people's gates off their hinges. Having done the appropriate and ritual "stunt," the holiday-maker was satisfied. It did not occur to him to seek for any other method of ebullition.

For contrast, look at the holiday-maker of to-day. Practically all of us develop a certain restlessness, usually beginning several days before the holiday arrives. We may plan to do certain things, involving the co-operation of a large party of friends. Having tied ourselves up to some programme of this kind, we begin to feel that perhaps we have made a mistake, and that more fun could have been procured by doing something else, something that some of our neigh-

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bours are reported to be planning to do. Or perhaps we do not succeed in making up our minds to any definite programme, because there are such a lot of things that we might want to do, and we hate to reach a decision and thereby exclude any of them. And then as the holiday approaches it dawns upon us that we are going to be too late to organise anything, and that we shall have to take such amusement as we can get at the last minute, and go to a restaurant or a movie or perhaps even more lamentably to a church service. Contrasting this method of celebration with the ideal "party" which we feel we ought to have organised, we grow more and more disgusted, until by the time we start for the theatre or the church service all the joy of holidaying has evaporated into a mist of jealousy of other and (as we imagine) more successful holiday-makers. And meanwhile the holiday-makers who have succeeded in tying themselves up to "parties" are just as bitterly envying our freedom. . . . The best thing about a modern holiday is the sense of relief with which we get back to routine the day after it is over.

The difference, of course, is largely due to the nature of our modern civilisation. It lies in the fact that we purchase our holiday joys with money. (I realise that the church service to which I have just referred is not open to this accusation; but I fear that a great many of the city-dwellers who attend service on Christmas or New Year's Day or Easter appraise the service quite consciously as an entertainment, and compare its points of interest with those presented by the movies and the dance palaces and the dining-rooms of the big hotels. The churches

might do better if some of them put on a good fat entrance-fee on holidays, and conveyed the idea that the proceeds would be expended in improving the singing.) There was no question about what our ancestors would do by way of celebrating the holiday, because not only by tradition but by the very necessities of the case, there was but one thing to do, and that the one thing for which the materials were seasonally available. The maypole, the harvest merry-making, the periodic village fair, these enlisted everybody, without money and without price. The amusement which they afforded cost little or nothing to produce. It was the result merely of making an organised use of the annually recurring fruits of the earth or the equally recurring visits of travelling traders and entertainers. There might be dancing, but the dancers needed no orchestra of performers and instruments brought from the more savage parts of the earth. There might be singing, but the singers were the villagers themselves, and the songs were the old ones on which they had been brought up since childhood. There was sure to be eating and drinking, but most of the eatables and drinkables were provided by the squire or local magnate, this being part of the price which he paid for his magnateship. The fairs certainly, and probably some of the other celebrations, afforded opportunities for the common citizen to spend a little money on side-issues, but the main show, to use the parlance of the circus, was entirely free. It is only when people begin consciously to go forth to *purchase* their holiday that competing purveyors of holiday entertainment begin to clamour in rivalry for their patronage. And that

HOLIDAYS LTD.

evil did not begin to afflict any but the uppermost strata of society until within our own generation.

Merriment is now an article turned out by mass production, wrapped up in glittering packages, and sold over the counter in varying sizes and strengths according to the purse of the purchaser. Up to a generation ago it used to be almost invariably home-made, and was given away rather than sold. Our ancestors made merry on the village green, until they became a trifle richer and made merry in the squire's mansion or the baron's hall. We make merry in the great hotels, and pay a great price for the privilege. The ingredients of the merriment are not greatly changed, for they consist as always of food, drink when allowed, dancing and minstrelsy. The platform from which our syncopated orchestra holds forth is merely the successor of the minstrels' gallery of the old baronial hall; chicken *à la king* is the choice of our weakened modern appetite in preference to the boar's head and the peacock pie. But the introduction of the cashier's wicket, inoffensive as it looks in its little corner near the door, changes the whole character of the affair. The guests in the baronial hall had no qualms about being there, because there was nowhere else for them to be. The host was not obliged to vie with a score of rival entertainment purveyors, all of them trying to outdo one another in the production, not of gaiety, for that cannot be manufactured, but of an artificial imitation of it consisting chiefly of noise and illumination. Nor did he have to provoke into joyousness a crowd of patrons like those of the modern restaurant, whose attitude seems to be: "We've paid ten dollars for

this shine of yours ; now make us merry, darn you, and be quick about it ! ” His guests came to him, not to be made merry, but to help in the merry-making, and if he was a wise old baron he probably let them have it a good deal their own way.

It was an unfortunate day for merriment when it became an object of trade. There is always a difficulty about trading in things that cannot be weighed and measured. In the early days of gin the vendors used to proclaim their wares by posting up : “ Drunk for a penny ; dead drunk for twopence. ” But they could deliver the goods ; the purchaser knew when he had a pennyworth, and his friends knew when he had had twopennyworth. It is not so with merriment. A man sets forth with ten dollars to purchase merriment ; in Europe he might do so at almost any time, but on this continent he will only do so at certain stated occasions, such as New Year’s Eve or the night after his college has won the football championship, and he will do it mainly from a sense of duty, an obscure feeling that it is the proper thing to do. He sets forth, then, and parts with his ten dollars, and there is set up within him, by food and lights and noise and appropriate company, a certain degree of the psychical activity known as merriment. But is it ten dollars’ worth ? He is not sure. He is not much accustomed to the comparative valuation of states of merriment, and among other things he may forget that they are harder to induce as we grow older. He feels perhaps that he has received nine dollars and fifty cents’ worth of merriment, but not more. A very little more merriment, as you may perceive, would turn the scale and give him a

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favourable balance of trade. But the more his mind dwells on this suspicion that he is only getting nine dollars and fifty cents' worth, the harder it becomes to make him any merrier. The suspicion itself, so to speak, poisons the wells of merriment at their source, turns their product sour within him, and runs down the register of his merriment pressure from \$9.50 to \$9, to \$8, to \$5, and finally down to a minus quantity ; he is less merry than when he came in, and he is out ten dollars into the bargain.

The purveyor of entertainment endeavours to counteract this natural and very common tendency in the only way open to him. He tries to give his clients no time to think whether they are merry or not. Keep them eating, drinking, dancing, shouting, blowing toy trumpets and sending up balloons, and make such a noise that they cannot tell one another how bored they are. Keep them participating in "stunts" that look as if they ought to be joyful even if they are not. Hire people to go among them and simulate merriment. Retaliate on their "we-dare-you-to-make-us-merry" attitude by adopting the reverse attitude even more vigorously ; that is to say, if they don't look merry, point them out to the whole assemblage and say : "This is a place for being merry ; what do you mean by coming here and not being merry ? Get merry quick or get out and go to the undertakers !" And it works ! So docile, so receptive to suggestion are we, that most of us will not only look merry but feel merry in order to avoid the humiliation of being so addressed.

Our ancestors had not only their days of merriment but also their days of mourning and humiliation.

We have dropped the latter. There is no demand for them, commercially. You can sell gaiety, but grief you cannot sell. I suspect that the fact that our ancestors could mourn was one reason why they could rejoice. There are still things that could be mourned over. Even in the very recent history of almost every nation on the surface of the globe there are things whose anniversary days might well be celebrated with national humiliation ; but we do not do it. We have made Easter an annual festival in honour of the fashion-designers and the florists ; but Good Friday has dwindled to little more than a half-ashamed merry-making in honour of the bun trade. We dance till three in the morning to remind ourselves that we licked the Germans ; but we do nothing to remind ourselves of the tragic misunderstandings in August 1914 that made it necessary for us to do so. As for New Year's Eve, it is the strangest perversion of the lot. For we have turned what is in essence a solemn time of self-review and self-dedication into an occasion for unrestrained jubilation over—God knows what ! Perhaps—not on New Year's Eve alone but on many other dates—we make merry just to avoid the necessity of thinking solemnly about solemn things.



THE TWO BEST WORDS IN ENGLISH

A MAN was recently reported to have been discovered in the purlieus of Ottawa, whose entire powers of utterance were limited to two words. He attracted considerable attention. This may have been due to his having chosen Ottawa to make his appearance in. He may indeed have been wandering around, with this same limited vocabulary, in other parts of Canada for years on end, and have failed to draw any special notice. But Ottawa is a place where people live by utterance ; a place which strong, silent men avoid with care. The average vocabulary of the Ottawans is probably one hundred per cent. greater than the average vocabulary of the rest of Canada ; a vocabulary of two words may be as remarkable there as one of half a word would be in Montreal.

To me the interesting thing about the Ottawa gentleman's case was not the small number of his words—for I have long been accustomed to dealing with pass students in the Universities—but his peculiar choice of the two words which he consented to use. These words were "wash" and "money." I think he could have done better. I can see no great disadvantages about a vocabulary limited to two words, but I feel that they should be selected with a good deal of care and discrimination. And I was

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moved to ponder upon the choice that I would myself make if I ever decided to give up the profession of essayist and to go in for that of strong, silent man. For, in spite of the case of Miss Gertrude Stein, it does not seem to me that an essayist could get along with two words. One can do a great deal with "moreover" and "however," but one does need at least a thin soil of nouns and verbs in which to plant them.

Much depends, of course, upon the profession and the locality in which the strong, silent man proposes to carry on his bi-verbal activities. It is barely conceivable that the vocabulary of my Ottawa friend might be well selected for the purposes of a Chinese laundry-man ; but curiously enough the despatches give no evidence of his being Chinese. It would certainly not be suitable for a bricklayer, a street-car conductor, or a chauffeur. But my own opinion is that any man who possesses the necessary self-control to restrict his utterances to two words need not bother about pursuing any of the ordinary trades or professions, but should aim at making a living for himself out of his own bi-verbalism and nothing else. His choice of words will then depend entirely upon where he wishes to live and the kind of people he wishes to live with. Nothing else need matter.

It should, I believe, be possible to obtain quite a reputation by living in the Prairie Provinces and never saying anything except "Free Trade !" It should be equally possible to do so by living in an eastern industrial centre and emitting at intervals the syllables "Protection !" This latter course leaves one word open for further selection, but I am not

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at all sure that this is an advantage ; " Protection " is enough in itself, and the more you describe or limit or qualify it the less you get anywhere. The choice of any word to go with " Protection " would be extremely difficult, and would involve grave risks of throwing away all the advantages accruing from the selecting of the original word itself. For Protection and Free Trade are like telephone numbers. If you want to get them, or to get anything like them, you just go ahead repeating the words themselves, without addition or ornamentation, in calm and distinct tones, until sheer reiteration wears away resistance and the desired number, or the desired policy, is obtained.

For anybody who desired to live in Toronto, and in the odour of sanctity among the Fundamentalist portion of the population, I suspect that the best two words might be " Whale " and " Jonah." These I admit are both nouns, and there is nothing in the vocabulary to indicate the relation between them ; but this can readily be done by gesture, since all that the bi-verbalist will have to convey is either the action of swallowing or the reverse and less polite action by which the whale restored Jonah to terrestrial life. I am not so sure about how to talk bi-verbally to the Modernists, but possibly a well-timed reiteration of " Evolution " is all that they would require.

Again, there are parts of the country, and large circles of intelligent and charming people living therein, in which a notable reputation for sagacity, modernity, and originality of mind could be acquired by never emitting any sound except the words

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“Proportional Representation.” There are other parts, and other circles, where the words “Hudson’s Bay” have a similarly magical and ritual significance.

In the United States, which was the first English-speaking country to discover that the word “elevator” is shorter than “lift,” the tendency is towards slightly lengthier slogans, and a pure bi-verbalist might find himself under greater handicaps than in Canada. The more blood-curdling of the American phrases are three or four-worders, such as “World safe for democracy,” “Too proud to fight,” “Remember the Maine,” “Forty-nine forty or fight,” and even such mouth-filling proclamations as “The Union must and shall be preserved.” In such a country the tongue needs more scope. Our friend from Ottawa would there, I think, be regarded as unreasonably reticent.

The whole strength of the bi-verbalist’s position is that by the very nature of his function he is compelled to abstain from anything in the least resembling argument. Argument, about things that can be reduced to a two-word formula, is futile ; it is worse than futile, it is fatal. But the temptation to argue is irresistible ; wherefore that man alone is safe who is protected from arguing either by the inhibitions of his tongue or by the resolution of an insuperable will-power. Whoever read or listened to an argument in favour of Free Trade without feeling himself a little more of a Protectionist, or one in favour of Protection, without feeling kinder towards Free Trade ?

An idea has occurred to me. The man who turned up in Ottawa saying only “Wash” and “Money” may have not been a Chinese laundryman ; he may

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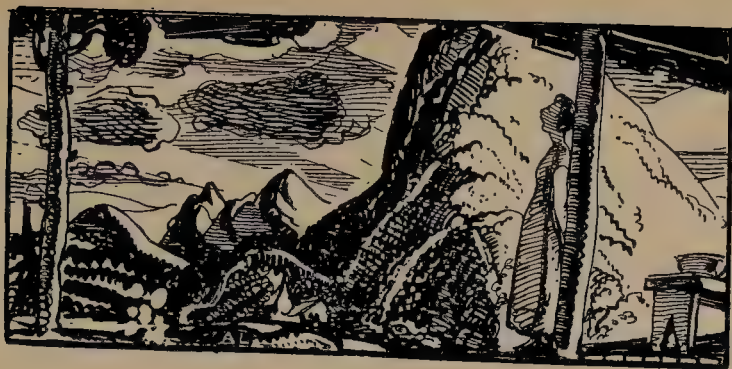
have actually been the founder of a new and promising slogan. He may be an advocate of cleaner one-dollar bills. If that is the case, and if he goes on saying "Wash money" long enough, we shall actually get them. The power of slogan is great ; but the power of slogan-plus-silence is unlimited.



Canadian Fables







THE MUSE OF MILDRED HALFSECTION

THIS is a simple little tale of the Canadian West. There are some human beings mentioned in it. To avoid all possible trouble, the author desires to make it clear at the outset that the human beings here depicted are not real human beings. There are no such human beings in Canada, or anywhere else where the Hudson's Bay Company might bring a suit for libel.

There are some animals mentioned in it. The author desires to make plain that there ain't no sich animals.

There are some corporations mentioned in it. The author desires to make it pellucid to the meanest intelligence that there are not in real life any such corporations. There is a bank mentioned, but there is no such bank. There is a railway mentioned, but it is not the Canadian National Railways. There will probably be a motor-car mentioned, but it is not

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the Ford car or any other known to garage men ; in fact, it is a car that we evolved out of our inner consciousness. In other words, it is the same make as the one that we ride in ourselves. It is a good car, but nobody will take it in exchange for any other make.

The only other warning that we want to utter is that all the rights pertaining to this story are reserved. Just what that means under the new Canadian Copyright Act we do not know, but to us it means that we shall be seriously annoyed (but at the same time slightly flattered) if anybody undertakes to translate this story into French, American, Chinese, gibberish, moving-picture-ish, grand opera, light opera, free verse, comic strips, or a Hart House Canadian playlet. The proceedings can now begin.

* * * *

This is a simple little tale of the Canadian West.

The sun was setting behind the Rockies. Vast forbidding summits etched their outline like a badly worn-out saw against the gold of the horizon. The long twilight of the autumn evening drew on apace.

(If one could only count upon one's readers knowing anything about geography, this dope would save one the trouble of saying in so many words that the scene is laid in Northern Alberta. But one can't count on anything of the kind. The reader will kindly note, therefore, that the scene IS laid in Northern Alberta. That is, all except the Albertan reader ; he will probably want to call it Central Alberta. . . . I wish I hadn't raised this geography question at all,

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when we were getting on so nicely. Perhaps we had better call it North Southern Alberta.)

Tired from his day's harvesting, but erect of form and alert of eye, Harold Halfsection strode into the living-room of the little shack which had been "home" to himself and his wife Mildred ever since their wedding two years ago.

With a glad cry, the pretty bride turned from the western window and ran lightly across the room into his arms.

"Oh, Harold," she cried, "I must make a poem of it! Is it not wonderful? I have been studying it ever since four o'clock." And then, seeing the slightly bewildered look on his handsome face: "I mean the sunset, silly goose! Our own beautiful Alberta sunset! The loveliest sunset in the world, and nobody has put it into poetry yet! Listen, Harold."

But Harold's alert eye had turned from the glowing west to the dinner-table, on which the dishes of the midday meal still stood in chill and greasy rows.

"Good gracious, Mildred," he said, and there was a distinct coldness in his tones which wounded the young bride to the quick, "haven't you done anything about supper yet? The harvest gang will be here in half an hour, and they'll be furious."

A tear stole down the cheek of the little bride and fell on the sheet of poetry in her hand. "Oh, Harold," she cried, "must we always be thinking of food and harvests and sordid things like that? I just couldn't bring myself to wash-up and peel potatoes when the sky was so wonderful. And I've written three and a half lines of a perfectly good sonnet, and I simply

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couldn't do anything until I had finished the quatrain. Won't you just do the washing-up while I get this rhyme ? ”

A week later Harold Halfsection strode with a determined air towards the bank which occupied a central corner (excuse us, towards one of the banks which occupied all of the central corners) of the little town where his pet elevator reared its monstrous form beside the railway track. The bank manager, an avaricious-faced man from Ontario, who had been sent out by the directors to skin the simple Western agriculturists and send their hides back home to Toronto, looked out of his office window and gloated silently as he saw Harold approach. “ Aha, Harold Halfsection, soon your beautiful farm with all its improvements will be ours, and you and your poetical Mildred will be out on the streets of Rocky Mountain City, and you will learn that Alberta is no place for poetry, and I shall get a transfer to a bigger branch and have a chance to foreclose electric traction companies instead of miserable little mixed farmers.”

But none of all this appeared in his facial expression as he shook Harold Halfsection by the hand and drew him into the inner office.

“ Mr. Skinner,” said Harold, “ I have got to buy my wife a gasoline-run dishwasher. Dishwashing interferes with her poetry, and poetry is after all the greatest thing in life, is it not ? Can you let me have another five hundred dollars ? ”

The banker smiled and counted out the money in bills of large denominations. And that Christmas Santa Claus brought a beautiful gasoline dishwasher and hung it on the Christmas-tree at the Halfsection

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farm. And a very jolly and poetical Christmas was had by all, including the hired man, whom Harold had just taken on at Mildred's urgent request, and who was really a professor of literature in disguise.

A year passed, and Christmas was again approaching. Harold Halfsection, immersed in the sordid cares of an Alberta grain-grower, and considerably worried by black rust and hailstorms and the boll weevil and the rising price of Stetson hats, had listened perfunctorily each Saturday evening through the summer to Mildred's weekly poem, but his applause had of late been less vigorous than that of the hired man. Once in the height of the threshing season, he even went out in the middle of the reading. That night Mildred wrote a poem for the hired man alone, but not being quite sure of the scansion of the third line she did not give it to him, contenting herself for the time being with tying it up in pink ribbon and putting it in the middle bureau drawer.

Then, one Saturday evening in November, as the three sat round the glowing coal-oil stove, the reading of the weekly crop of verse was interrupted. A lamentable cry as of a cow that has lost its mate penetrated into the room from the farmyard outside. Harold's brow clouded slightly.

"Mildred, dear, did you milk Phyllida?" he asked, and there was a note in his voice that made the hired man move silently and almost stealthily towards the door.

"No, Harold," replied Mildred, bravely, but with a little tremor in her voice. "I have not milked Phyllida for three days now. The milk you have been using is Ivorine at thirteen cents a tin. It is strange,

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but the inspiration seems to come upon me just the time when Phyllida wants milking, and I cannot disregard it. And what is a little milk compared with the great poem of the Canadian West ? ”

Harold bowed his head. “ That is very true, Mildred,” he said. “ Cows are temporal, but poetry is eternal. You must fulfil your mission. I will attend to Phyllida.”

The next day Harold sped towards Mr. Skinner’s bank in his speedy and heavily mortgaged motor-car and borrowed another five hundred dollars ; and that Christmas Santa Claus came out in the starlit midnight to hang a powerful little milking machine of the very newest model on the Halfsection Christmas-tree, and peace and poesy reigned over the lovely snow-clad farm, and Mildred decided not to give the poem to the hired man at all, but to keep it and see if she could not work Harold’s name into the metre and give it to her husband as a New Year gift—especially if, as she rather expected, he gave her a half-dozen sets of new silk undies.

But Harold did not come across with the drygoods at New Year, and the poem remained in the middle bureau drawer. And a year passed by, including as usual four quarterly interest days, and Harold was getting sadly in arrears. And that autumn the boll weevils descended and the chinooks blew and the hail fell and the smut smote and the rust rusted, and Harold’s crop was a complete washout, and Phyllida faded away and died, and the pigs got out and were lost on the prairie, and by December there was practically nothing left of the farm except Harold and Mildred and the hired man. The hired man had not

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been paid for three months and Harold could not imagine why he stayed, but there he was every meal-time.

Came the dawn of the day before Christmas, and bright and early in the frosty mist Banker Skinner and two husky horse-faced bailiffs cranked up their trusty motor-car and started forth, loaded to the door-catch with writs and seizures, for the Halfsection farm. They found Mildred alone in the farmhouse, writing an Elegy upon a Gopher-Hole, for Harold and the hired man were scouring the prairie in different directions for the missing pigs. With brief and formal apologies they began removing the furniture and piling it in their car. They were still thus occupied when Harold, who had heard the unusual noise from a distance of some three and a half miles, returned to the farm. Tired from his morning's pig-hunting, but still moderately erect of form and alert of eye, he strode into the little living-room which had been "home" to himself and his pretty bride ever since their wedding four years ago. (The last time we mentioned it we omitted to explain that the living-room was all there was of the shack.) But no little bride ran across the room into his arms. This was because Mildred was out in the front yard watching the loading of the furniture upon the car and cheerfully hoping that it would spill off when the car turned out of the driveway into the road. She was also hoping for something else to happen, but at the present stage of the story we must not divulge what that happening was.

As Harold stepped into the front yard the bailiffs were carrying out the bureau. The middle drawer

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fell out with a crash, and the pink-ribboned poem fluttered to Harold's feet. The third line was still very weak in scansion, and Mildred had not yet altered the names. Harold did not mind the irregularities of the metre ; he was, in fact, without knowing it, an advocate of free verse. But the fact that the poem was addressed to the hired man cut him to the quick.

"All gone !" he groaned, as he looked around him. "The farm ; the wheat ; the pigs ; Phyllida ; the furniture ; my little Mildred ! All gone !" And the alertness disappeared from his eye and the erectness from his form. As Mildred came towards him he turned his eyes to the ground, and held out the poem to her without a single glance in her direction.

"Take him," he said in a hollow voice. "You are free, you are perfectly free. Of course he loves you. Any hired man would love you. I was blind, but I see now. I am not worthy of you. I will go away. I could never help you with your scansion, for I am only a poor Bachelor of Agriculture, but he is an extramural graduate in Arts. Take him, and become the poetess laureatess of Alberta ; and remember sometimes, amid the glories of your official residence in Edmonton, that Harold Halfsection did what he could to help you."

But the little bride made no move to accept the poem (and inferentially the hired man with it) from Harold's outstretched hand. "Wait," she murmured softly ; "wait, Harold. You do not understand !"

Already a little cloud of steam on the horizon betokened the approach of the rural free delivery

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postman with a badly overheated radiator and a carload of Christmas mail. As he turned in to the driveway, hallooing cheerily in the friendly Western manner, Mildred ran to meet him, and when he handed her a long envelope (long but thin) with a Toronto postmark and the imprint of a great national magazine on its front (don't forget our warning, reader ; there is no such magazine), she could not restrain her delight, and embracing his overcoated form she kissed his frozen left whisker with ardent affection. At the same moment the hired man, pigless but happy, also drifted into the farmyard, and seemed in nowise perturbed at the picture that met his eye. But Banker Skinner, who came on the scene thirty seconds later, scowled and twisted his watch-chain.

Airily Mildred tore open the long envelope. Airily she beckoned to her husband to approach. Airily she waved a cheque which bore in small letters the name of a sound and trustworthy bank, and in very large letters that of the great magazine publishing firm which issues *Hinterland Hints* and also the *Wheat Growers' Weapon*.

"Come here, Harold. Come here, Professor Hinkslinger." (Harold started at this, for he had always known the hired man by the name of Jim Hinks.) "Come here, Banker Skinner ; and you too, whoever you are, underneath that bureau.

"Harold, you have always thought in the bottom of your heart—no, do not deny it—that my poetical labours were impractical and useless compared with your wheat-raising. And you, Banker Skinner, have cunningly calculated on my ruining my husband by

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my addiction to poetry, and this very morning you have come here to drive us from our beloved home. And here is your answer. Here, Banker Skinner, is the fifty-thousand-dollar cheque offered by the something-or-other magazine—I forget its exact name, and you wouldn't know it anyhow—for the best Canadian poem in the manner of the Spoon River Anthology. I wrote that poem, and Professor Hinkslinger here—Harold, meet Professor James Hinkslinger, assistant editor of the Canadian Hearth, Home and Radiator Magazine—helped me to do it and revised my scansion. And in return I have been helping Professor Hinkslinger, who is studying Western life from the inside, to write the Prairie Prize Novel which appeared last month and is already in its third edition. No wonder, Harold, you thought he was a very poor hired man !

“ Take the cheque, Mr. Skinner, and pay off our mortgages, and put the balance to the credit of my husband's account. As this is the season of goodwill we will forgive you and continue to bank with you, for the sake of your little ones and the wives and families of your directors.

“ And, Harold, Professor Hinkslinger does not love me and I don't love him. He can't love me ; his fiancée won't let him. He is engaged to be married to Anne Martha Merrilees, editor of the Women's Department of his magazine. And I don't love anybody or anything except you and—and poetry.”

And blushing prettily, Mildred hid her face in her husband's manly bosom, while Harold, once again erect of form and positively flashing as to eye, led her gently towards the living-room of the shack. The

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postman was already disappearing in a cloud of steam ; the bailiffs were sheepishly unloading the furniture ; the banker was furtively trying to write a poem on the back of an old dishonoured cheque which he happened to have with him ; the professor was starting off again after the pigs.

When Santa Claus came to the Halfsection homestead next day it was a happy and reunited household that he found there. For Professor Hinkslinger had rounded up the pigs, and Miss Merrilees had arrived by the evening train bringing the first instalment of the royalties on the novel. And Santa Claus brought the six sets of silk undies, but that was because Mildred, with great foresight, had ordered them sent out C.O.D.

Only poor Phyllida—but remember, sympathetic reader, that there never was no sich animal.



HOW THE OLD FARM HAS CHANGED !

NO, I am not going into the country to stay at the old farmhouse for the summer, not any more. The family can go, if it likes. The dog can go, if he likes. The rest of the Board of Trade, and the Rotary Club, and the General Cement Company, and the Victoria Square Presbyterian Church, they can all go, if they like. But not me.

I am a business man. In summer I am even a Tired Business Man. I used to go to the old farm to get away from Business. Old Joe Smith, the farmer, was a sort of a third cousin of mine, and he knew what I went there for, and he sympathised and helped. If anything in the least resembling Business came within a mile of old Joe's place, Joe would go out and shoo it back towards the city. Joe could intercept, and then mysteriously lose and forget about, a telegram (if it was a business telegram) better than any man I ever met. Joe was a vacation in himself, and Joe's farm was an Elysium.

Joe maintained that there was a difference between Business and Work. When it came to work, so Joe maintained, there wasn't a man in Durdurn County to whom he couldn't give cards and spades. He said that it was possible to be very busy without having any business, and that he was a living example of it.

He certainly was pretty constantly occupied, but it



AND WENT OUTSIDE TO LOOK AT THE PIGS

HOW THE OLD FARM HAS CHANGED !

seemed to me to be a restful occupation. He rose early, it is true, and went outside to look at the pigs or at something else that needed looking at. There is always something on a farm that needs looking at, and when other things gave out I have known Joe to go and look at the sunrise. When he rose he woke the hired man, Jim, to make sure that Jim would go to work, and he woke Mrs. Smith, to make sure that she would get the breakfast.

With an appetite all freshened up by the dewy air of the morning he would come in after looking at the pigs or whatever it might have been, and eat a five-course meal. Whether the pre-breakfast inspection did any good to the pigs I never knew, but it did a lot of good to old Joe.

After breakfast there would be some cows to look at, or a field of wheat, or a new hole in the pigsty ; or the chickens and their diet to discuss with Mrs. Smith ; or it might be a lightning-rod agent to be argued with, or a local Chautauqua promoter ; or on exceptionally good days there was a funeral to be hitched up for. Any two or three of these occupations would suffice to provide an appetite for dinner. Old Joe always said that it was a great help to have me along when he tackled these exacting jobs. It is nice to be appreciated.

Much of the afternoon would be spent considering and digesting the information acquired during the morning. A decision might be reached about the hole in the pigsty, or about the chickens and their diet. A date might be set for reaping the field of wheat, and that would mean doing some telephoning for the necessary help. About three the city paper might be expected to arrive in the rural delivery box

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on the front road, about half a mile from the house, and that would mean a pleasant walk there and back, with a lot of other things to be looked at so that one could not hurry. With the paper in hand and the weather reports under the eye, the sky could be scanned for to-morrow's weather, so that one could arrange what should be done on that day—but not too definitely, lest the weather should fail to perform as predicted.

* * * *

If by this time Joe and I were still unexhausted by the day's labours, we would stroll over to the creek and get a mess of fish for the evening meal. The addition of these fish never caused the modification or cancellation of any other part of the projected menu ; and there was never any more food left over than there would otherwise have been. Apparently the exertion of getting the fish, and the pride of bringing them home, increased our appetites in exactly the same degree as the fish themselves increased the supplies.

After supper there would be some talk about the hardships of the farmer's life and the iniquities of the tariff, in which Mrs. Smith did not participate because she had gone to bed, and because her father in his lifetime had been a Conservative. And an hour or so later we would all go to bed, thoroughly satisfied that we were doing our full share of the productive work of the world.

And it was all so delightfully leisurely and independent—so radically different from life in the head office of the General Cement Company. If the pigsty didn't get mended to-day, it could always be mended to-morrow, and nothing would happen except that

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perhaps the old sow would get out once again. If the wheat didn't get cut, well anyhow it would be heavier next week. If the chickens didn't get their diet changed, why perhaps they would quit dying anyhow and then one would know that the present diet must be all right. It was no use worrying, especially about getting things done all in a rush. Remember the case of old man Penniquick across the road, who got his wheat in in an awful hurry three years ago because he said that he had word from the Lord that there was going to be another plague of hailstones ; and what did it do but go and burn up in his barn that very night, every bushel of it, and not a hailstone seen in Dundurn Country until next spring. . . . Besides, it was written in the fates that farmers were not to be prosperous, and the farmer who acted as if he thought there was even the remotest chance of becoming prosperous by energy and promptitude was merely inviting reprisals—"flying in the face of Providence," some people called it.

I do not wish to suggest that this philosophy of conduct was thus crudely stated in our discussions, either by Joe Smith or myself ; but looking back upon them now I feel that it was there in our minds, tacitly underlying all that we said, and accounting very largely for everything that we did and for many things that we did not do.

And it is not a bad philosophy, if you happen to be built that way. It suited Joe perfectly. And I have no doubt whatever that Joe is now in heaven. It would be no use sending him to hell. He was so contented a nature that he would never believe that the place he was in was any other than the best available.

* * * *

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Obviously this was just the kind of life to afford complete change and relaxation from the ordinary occupations of a Tired Business Man from the city. There was no telephone incessantly ringing at one's elbow ; true, there was a telephone, but it hung on the wall in a back hallway, and nine out of ten of its rings were for somebody else on the same party-line. There was no huge pile of letters on the desk in the morning. There was no stenographer waiting for dictation. There were no hastily-called committee meetings of the Rotary Club, or the Cement Section of the Board of Trade, or the Church Preservation Association, or the Community Choirs. There was no Business.

There was not even the Business of Pleasure. I have spent summer vacations in places where everybody seemed to be working harder in the pursuit of pleasure than I do in winter in the pursuit of a living. There are summer hotels where the hunt for pleasure is organised down to the last insignificant item, much as if pleasure were like an elephant, only to be brought down in safety with the aid of a party of native beaters, a carefully prepared trap, and an expedition of thirty or forty guns. But at old Joe's place you never prepared for anything unless the preparation itself were a pleasure. To show you the kind of man he was : he enjoyed freezing the ice-cream just as much as he enjoyed eating it, and he made everybody else feel the same way. To suffer over the freezing of ice-cream, in the dubious expectation of enjoying the ice-cream itself, seemed to him to be the height of idiocy ; and consequently nobody ever froze ice-cream except when they felt like freezing it, just as nobody went fishing except when they felt like going

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fishing. As a result the diet was entirely unpredictable ; one day would be all ice-cream and the next day all fish, but the very uncertainty and variety were themselves pleasurable.

We used to look forward to these planless weeks in the drowsy summertime as one looks forward to a warm bath on a zero day.

* * * *

But two years ago the old man died, and John, his son, took over the farm. John had been taking a course in Commerce and Economics at Columbia and Harvard, and his Ph.D. thesis, *Graphs for Grain Growers*, is said to be revolutionising the wheat industry.

Last year I went out as usual to the farm, but this year the visit is off. We are going to look for some real country life somewhere. I am thinking of Atlantic City, or some other place where peace comes dropping slow from the veils of the morning, as it used to do out on the farm but doesn't any more.

The first thing I found on arrival at the farm was that John was putting it on a business basis. It was no longer a farm ; it was a production unit of the wheat and dairy industries.

The room where old Joe and I had been accustomed to put our feet up on the empty stove, while we held our evening discussion on the unprofitableness but fascinating nature of farming and the iniquity of the tariff, had been converted into an office. It was considerably more office-like than any office in the General Cement building except the general manager's. Where the spittoon stood aforetime was a three-deck filing cabinet. Where the almanac and the picture of

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“ Lifting the Mortgage ” used to hang there was an immense blueprint on which pins in various places indicated the production cost and the latest market price of every conceivable kind of agricultural product. Maps and graphs of the world’s cereal areas and their respective production crowded the walls, displacing the cherished relics which had thrilled my boyhood vision—the photographs of the two-headed calf born on the farm in 1879, of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, of the old man’s record string of fish, of his wedding party grouped around the buggy, of Queen Victoria and of President McKinley.

Instead of the old open bookshelf knocked together by a hired man with carpentering ambitions, and trimmed with plush and brass nails by the farmer’s wife herself, there stood a large block of sectional bookcases, whose contents suited them as perfectly as the old library had suited the old bookshelf. Gone were the *Universal Veterinarian*, *Log Cabin to White House*, and the *History of Slavery* in three volumes—tokens, not of any pronounced Americanism in the literary tastes of my dear old friend, but merely of the enterprise of a book distributing agency in Sandusky, Ohio, which had flooded Canada with the most persuasive colporteurs that that generation had ever known. Gone was the *Life of John Knox* and that of William Ewart Gladstone. Gone were the *Prominent Canadians of Dundurn County*, that expensive volume of real photographs and truthful biographical sketches, which the old man had bought out of pure family pride, since it included his uncle, the founder of the long since absorbed Dundurn Bank and one of the directors of the never completed

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Dundurn and Pacific Railway. Gone were the old man's two beloved Classics, Milton and Smollett, and the Cruden Concordance and the Poems of Shakespeare (it was always a sore point with the old man that his wife would not let him have the plays on the ground that they were immoral). And the bound volume of Harper's for 1873, and all the rest.

In their place was a magnificent ten-volume Cyclopædia of Agricultural Economics ; an Agricultural Statistics of the World ; three books on the Marketing of Farm Products ; a Botany of Wheat, a Botany of Rye, and a Botany of Indian Corn or Maize ; two shelves of pamphlet reports ; a shelf of books on plant diseases ; a shelf of books on internal explosion engines ; a shelf of books on soils ; and a vast dictionary-like volume which purported to be a Bibliography of Agricultural Science.

* * * *

The first day of the visit I strolled into this office after dinner, trying to look as nonchalant as possible. It wasn't a good stroll. The room was so obviously not a room to be strolled into. I felt that there ought to be an office-boy on a stool outside to inquire my business ; but there wasn't. That first day I did not tap : something within me told me that I ought to, but somehow a vision of the amazed and hurt look that would have come on the old man's face if I had tapped before entering the " settin'-room " came up before my eyes and prevented me. I never made that mistake again, however.

John looked up from his flat-topped desk with a business-like air.

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"Glad you came in," he said. "I can see you for five minutes. The men are not due to make their reports until one. Have a cigar?"

And with the same brusque, this is part of the business of the day air, and out of the same top left-hand drawer, he produced the same sized box of the same kind of small but excellent cigars as the operating vice-president of General Cement invariably gives me on those rare occasions when I intrude upon his seclusion.

"Take a chair. I wanted to ask you some questions, to check up the information my Agricultural Conditions Service gives me. What do you General Cement people hear about conditions in Chile and Ecuador? I hear your Foreign Trade man made his report last week."

I had not got far into my answer—which sounded as if it was going to be both verbose and vague, but I couldn't help it; I had dismissed Chile and Ecuador from my mind when I left the city, and had never expected to meet them in the old man's "settin'-room" within two hours of my arrival—when the telephone rang and gave me time to collect my thoughts. I noticed that it was no longer a party-line.

Have you ever noticed the difference between a man answering a telephone in the course of his business duties and a man (or woman) answering one in the way of private life? To the man in business it is just the same as one of the stops in an organ to the organist—one of a hundred devices to be employed for the production of the effects at which he aims. He can operate a dozen of these devices at once. With one hand he lifts the earpiece, with one side of his mouth he grunts "Hello," while with

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the other hand he signs letters, with the other side of the mouth he dictates to the stenographer, and with his eyes he studies a graph or a detail map. Even so, unfluttered, precise, mechanical, did John answer this telephone call ; and I thought of the nervous, apprehensive haste with which the old man had always clumped through the hallway on those rare occasions when the bell rang seven times in succession and then stopped.

* * * *

“ Hello ! Yes, John Smith speaking. What ? International Bureau Bulletin ? Yes ? Estimated world shortage four hundred million bushels. Right. Carry-over normal. Shipping rates breaking on Atlantic, Pacific high. Right. Bolsheviki negotiating for a loan. What’s that ? Dundurn County Potato Valorisation Committee, five o’clock to-day ? Very annoying, such short notice. . . . Oh, I see. All right, I’ll be there.”

He hung up and turned to me. Possibly something in my expression suggested the need of explanations.

“ Poor old father, you know, had no idea of modern business methods in agriculture. The farmer produces to-day for a world market, and he must know what his competitors and customers are doing. I get the daily report of the Dabson Statistical Institute by wire to our local branch and then by telephone, and we supplement it by complete statistics of our own local production and market conditions. We are threatened with an overproduction of potatoes in the three counties, and something must be done about it at once. Probably we shall buy up the crop in Dundurn County and just plow it in. Scientific

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organisation, business methods, that's the only thing in modern farming. But I never could convince the old man."

"I think I will go fishing while you are at the meeting," I said.

"Oh, didn't I tell you?" he answered. "I've leased the fishing to a Detroit millionaire. So I'm afraid you can't. But if you like shooting crows there are a lot down in the creek meadow. Or squirrels?"

"Thank you very much," I replied.

"And what about Chile?"

"I think I had better send you the report in writing," I answered, "from the city. There are some figures that might interest you. And I shall be back there to-morrow."





DECEMBER AFTERNOON IN A BOOKSTORE

OH, Mrs. Miniver, I'm so glad to see you. You're so literary since you took that course on Browning that the Women's Club did, and I couldn't go—you remember, little Amy was teething. And you can help me buy a good, a really good, novel for Jim. I always put a book on top of his cigars and neckties and things—I think one owes that much to literature at Christmas, don't you?

But it's so terribly difficult to know what to get, and dear Mr. Shelves here is not always quite reliable. You know what I mean. . . .

There was the time he told me to buy that dreadful "Jurgwin"—no, that wasn't quite it; you remember the book, it was by that charming Mr. Cable who used to write so nicely about Louisiana, but he seems to have gone quite off his head—I suppose it's the war—but he must be old enough to know better by this time. And before I could return it, not only Jim had read it but Junior and Phyllis and even little

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Sylvia who was staying with us that year. And the back was quite bent, and I had a dreadful time getting Mr. Shelfs to exchange it. But really—you know——

And one has to be so careful. Isn't it terrible the things they're putting in novels now? And Phyllis tells me that she actually has to study some of those books in class in her Contemporary Authors course! I must say she doesn't complain, but doesn't it seem—well—you know.

Now what about this one, Mrs. Miniver? it has a nice expensive-looking cover, hasn't it? Do you know anything——

What did you say his other book was? Oh, "The Green Hat." Something about cardinals, is it? Oh no, they're red, of course; how silly of me! No, I didn't—you think I'd better not? Well, it looked so nice and showy, that was all. But, of course, those paper jackets don't last.

I'll take a rapid glance at this one. Sometimes one can tell from the sixth chapter—they're usually through the preliminaries by that time. . . . No, this won't do; it has something about Rotarians in it, and you know Jim is a Kiwanian. He says that no modern novelist seems to appreciate the spirit of brotherhood and boost that is in these societies and someday somebody will write a real Rotary-Kiwanian novel, from the inside. Jim says there would be millions in it. But evidently this isn't it. And he doesn't care to be written about as a symptom of the age like bootleggers and the Ku-Klux-Klan.

And all these books about college life, too. It's really very puzzling. Junior and Phyllis read a lot of

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them, and they say they're quite an accurate picture of the life of any university except Toronto, but that somehow Toronto isn't nearly as naughty as the others. I must say I was very glad to hear it, for I shouldn't like the dear children to associate with some of the people one reads about in these colleges where they go in for Experimental Psychology. Don't you think these are some things that even a university needn't teach?

. . . Oh, Mr. Shelfs, just a minute! My regular Christmas book for my husband, you know. What would you advise this year? You've read all these things, of course. . . . "The Page Letters"—but aren't they largely about the war? I think my husband likes to forget about the war; you see it was very hard on us—our income-tax is simply incredible. And his brother's son, you know, was terribly shell-shocked—he isn't earning anything even yet. So I think——

You suggest a work of reference? Well, I think my husband keeps them at the office. Or Sport! . . . Oh, are there books on sport? How nice. Why, yes—"Golf Clubs and How to Know Them"—I should think that would be splendid. Only I didn't want a red one.

Oh, Mrs. Miniver, do look at these lovely book rests! They're just about the colour to go with our new curtains. And Jim has at least a dozen books already. . . . Mr. Shelfs! . . . Oh, Mr. Shelfs, will you please put these aside for me until I bring in a sample of the curtains and make quite perfectly sure?

There! . . . that gets the book off my mind. Where do you go next, Mrs. Miniver?

THE WEISSNICHTVOTERS

IDO not think that sufficient attention has been paid to the experiment, and the experiences, of the Proportional Representation Society of Weissnichtwo, that charming old autonomous city in Ruritania from whose vine-embowered villas so many suggestions for the better conduct of human life have been communicated to the world. The tale was told me by a professor who left Weissnichtwo about a year after the events which I am about to describe, and is now resident in Canada. He was full of enthusiasm for the principles developed and put into practice by the Weissnichtvoters, to use the peculiar name which he gives to the inhabitants of his native city ; and he proposes to devote the rest of his lifetime to propagating these principles in parts of the world where they do not as yet prevail. The intensity of his enthusiasm may, I think, be gathered from his answer to a question which I put to him early in our acquaintance. " When do you and your wife propose to return to Weissnichtwo ? " I asked him, having in mind (for I had become very fond of him) that it would be pleasant to visit the intellectual centre of Ruritania under his guidance. He looked at me very earnestly. " My wife will return with my dead body," was his reply.

Weissnichtwo does not, I understand, claim to be

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the originator of the principle of Proportional Representation. It claims merely to have carried that principle to a more complete and logical practical development than has been done elsewhere. Weissnichtvoters are a sternly logical people. When the fact was brought to their attention that, under the crude and brutal form of government which has grown up in modern Euro-American democracies, the votes of nearly half of the Weissnichtvoters were constantly being overridden and flatly reversed by the votes of the other fraction of the citizenry, they at once realised that this was not a condition consonant with the principles for which Ruritania sacrificed so much in the Great War. It was ascertained by their statisticians that after one municipal election the sitting Council consisted of persons who had received approximately 5,100 out of the 10,000 votes cast by the entire electorate, while the slightly smaller number of 4,900 had cast their votes for persons who, the day after the election, had no more say in the affairs of Weissnichtwo than the youngest (pardon me, the professor's term was "the oldest," and I think the point is characteristic) and most insignificant of the electors. It is true that of the elected persons, twenty in number, eleven belonged to the party which had received the 5,100 votes, and nine to the party which had received the 4,900. But the Weissnichtvoters do not think very highly of parties, and it was no consolation to a Little-Endian in Ward One that the representative of Ward Two was a Little-Endian, so long as Ward One itself had nobody but a Big-Endian in the Council. Besides, this Council had not been sitting long before

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it became clear that the Little-Endians would have practically nothing to say about the process of government, except to register a minority vote against it at every possible stage. So, in effect, eleven Councillors who after all had received only an average of 260 votes each, or a total of 2,860 votes, were actually controlling the destinies of 10,000 electors and 30,000 non-voting Weissnichtvoters, to say nothing of 750 horses, 1,000 goats, 1,200 dogs, and an uncertain number of cats and small vermin.

As soon as this was made clear, the *intelligentsia* of Weissnichttwo, led by the eleven defeated candidates of the defeated party, and not unassisted by the nine defeated candidates of the victorious party, founded the Weissnichttwo Proportional Representation Society, the original object of which, as stated in its charter, was "to ensure that the Council of Weissnichttwo shall at all times be an accurate representation in little of the varying shades of opinion existing in the electorate, in their correct proportions." The most eminent mathematicians of Weissnichttwo were called in to aid in the devising of a ballot system which would produce the desired effect. They eventually decided that any citizen on the electoral roll should be capable of being elected to the Council without the formality of being nominated, and that any such citizen who received as many as ten votes should be considered as having been so elected, but as having in the Council only a voting power proportional to the number of votes which he himself had received. As there were ten thousand electors, and any ten electors could create a vote in the Council, it followed that each Councillor had one vote for every ten votes that had

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been cast for him in the election, or a possible total of one thousand Council votes. It would obviously have been possible under this system for the Council to have consisted of one thousand members with one vote apiece ; this would have necessitated a considerable enlargement of the Council-chamber, but the mathematicians predicted, and they were borne out by the results, that there would be a great bunching of votes upon a few leading candidates. What actually happened was that a grateful populace gave the president of the Proportional Representation Society 4,000 votes, the vice-president 2,000 votes, and scattered the remaining 4,000 over forty different candidates, in varying proportions. The two P.R. officers thus had complete control of the Council, which on the other hand was perfectly representative of the opinions of the electorate, so far as one representative could possibly represent the views of ten electors.

“ And now,” said the Weissnichtvoters, “ we have a Council which is really representative of the opinions of the electorate. There is no unrepresented minority, and every representative has power in exact proportion to the votes he received from the electors. No other city has such a perfect form of government. Banzai Weissnichtwo ! ”

Things went very well for a time. The minority members attended meetings, and gave expression to what they supposed to be the opinions of those who had elected them, but what were really the opinions (more or less) of the people who had organised and financed their campaigns. But the president of the Proportional Representation Society, whose name

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was Gong, and the vice-president, whose name was Zoom, had 60 per cent. of the voting power in the Council, and had, as they frequently pointed out, a grave responsibility to the six thousand Weissnichtvoters who had elected them—a responsibility which precluded them from being influenced in the slightest degree by the arguments or the appeals of the representatives of the other four thousand. After a year or so it began to dawn on the brighter of the four thousand that they had no more weight in the councils of Weissnichtwo than any other minority had ever had. And they began to murmur mightily.

About this time it became necessary for the Council to decide whether the new tickets on the municipal omnibuses should be red or blue or green. The question may not at first sight appear to be one of grave importance, as indeed I remarked with some astonishment to my friend the professor. But it had, as he proceeded to explain, its symbolic aspect. Red, the colour of that essential fluid which runs in the veins of all humanity (but does not show until it has been spilled), was the colour of the Brotherly-Love party in Weissnichtwo, which desired above all things to live in peace and concord with the rest of humanity, especially those parts of it which were furthest away. Green was the colour of the Agricultural party, which maintained that no man was a true citizen and worthy of the privileges of such unless he was engaged in the raising of foodstuffs. And blue was the colour of the Weissnichtwo Imperialists, who saw in the charming but sluggish stream which runs through their city the key to the dominion of the seas, and were all out for a strong navy. The disputes

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among these factions had been somewhat calmed, or more correctly forgotten, during the great campaign for Proportional Representation ; but with that question settled and out of the way, they flared up again.

President Gong was a Big-Endian Imperialist ; Vice-President Zoom was a Little-Endian Agriculturist ; the next largest voter in the Council was a Little-Endian Brotherly-Lover. Gong started with the immense advantage of having 40 per cent. of the voting power under his own hat ; but Imperialism was not strong among the minority members, who were all tired of Gong domination in any event, and he could not raise more than 3 per cent. of additional votes. Zoom was much stronger with the minority, and raised his own 20 per cent. to 32 per cent. But the remaining 25 per cent. were invincibly Red. The dispute raged for months. The omnibuses got along all right, for the Superintendent, an exceptionally intelligent man, whose patriotism was, however, under grave suspicion because he was thought not to have voted for anybody, issued white " ticket certificates," exchangeable for real tickets " if, as and when issued," and they worked perfectly.

It then occurred to a member of the philosophy staff of Weissnichtwo University (a colleague of my friend's), who had voted for Gong but who wanted green tickets, that he was not being properly and proportionately represented in this conflict by his elected representative. This eminent authority (but why should I suppress the name of that benefactor of humanity, Dr. Ulrich Topian ?) wrote a long letter to the *Weissnichtwo Vanguard*. " I voted for President

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Gong," he said, "because he adequately represents my opinions on the subject of the proper method of representation and on various kindred matters. But on this matter of omnibus tickets he is completely out of touch with myself and with a large number of other voters whom he is supposed to represent. I demand, therefore, either that Gong be recalled, or that an entirely new elective body be created to represent the views of the citizens on this vital question of tickets, while the Council continues to act in other and less important matters."

The result of this letter was the institution of what is now one of the city's most honourable, if not most active, governing bodies, the Board of Supervisors of Omnibus Tickets, who were elected in the same way as the Council, and proved to consist of 30 per cent. Blues, 33 per cent. Reds, and 37 per cent. Greens. White certificates continued to be used for another year, for the Board was unable to reach any decision. Then a Blue who had 5 per cent. of the voting power died, and autumn came on, and Greens to a value of 10 per cent. went out into the country to harvest their crops, and while they were away the Reds bribed 15 per cent. of the remaining Greens to vote for red tickets this year in exchange for a promise that they themselves would vote for green ones the year after ; and thus a red-ticket vote was secured before the absentee Greens could get back.

The uproar in the city was terrific. Blues and Greens laid aside their mutual hatred to mob the Reds whenever they saw them in small quantities. Omnibus conductors were thrown off their vehicles when they proffered the new red tickets, until they

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took to protecting themselves by wearing a Green badge on one side of their coats and a Blue one on the other. Fortunately there are some men whose minds act better in a state of riot than in a state of peace. Dr. Topian, riding home on top of a bus amid a hail of decayed cabbages (from the Greens) and of fragments of roofing-slates (from the Blues), suddenly saw what was the matter with the system of government of Weissnichtwo, and immediately indited another letter to the *Vanguard*.

"The error that we have made," he said, "is in devoting our entire attention to proportionality of Representation, when what we should have aimed at is proportionality of Legislation. It is not sufficient that our governing body, or bodies, should accurately represent all shades of opinion in the community. It is necessary, in the interests of freedom, justice and democracy, that their legislation and administration should be similarly proportional. I propose, therefore, that our omnibus tickets shall be printed on parti-coloured paper, having an area of blue, an area of green and an area of red, each exactly proportioned to the votes cast for those respective colours by the members of the electorate."

And thus was born, out of the stress of necessity and amid the clash of battle, that tremendous principle of Proportional Legislation which, when properly grasped by the democracies of the world, is destined to revolutionise government and abolish tyranny. The Weissnichtvoters instantly perceived its significance. They enacted it into their constitution, to be applied not merely to omnibus tickets but to all the affairs of public life. Only one kind of difficulty was now left,

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namely, that of determining the exact basis for proportionalism in each separate case. It was not always as simple as dividing up the area of the omnibus tickets. Over its application to the market dues, which the Weissnichtvoters exacted on all produce brought into their municipal area, there was a long and bitter controversy. The electors were divided into No Dues, Low Dues, Middle Dues and High Dues, to say nothing of a small faction known as Haman's Gallowers, who wanted every imported article seized and every importer hanged outside the gates. It was proposed to impose No Dues on ten articles, Low Dues on thirty, Middle Dues on fifty and High Dues on the rest, those being roughly the proportions of the various parties ; and this was actually tried in practice. But it soon appeared that the No Dues and Low Dues articles provided about 95 per cent. of the imports, which was clearly a gross violation of the principles of proportionalism ; so in the long run it was decided to impose Low Dues on a certain number of market-days, High Dues on others, and so on. When my friend left Weissnichtwo this system was working fairly well, though some complaint was uttered that the market seemed somewhat busier on Low Dues days than on High Dues days.

The week before my friend left, Ruritania found itself engaged in a war with its neighbour Sempiternia. The city of Weissnichtwo, which claims complete autonomy even in respect of war and peace, was immediately faced with the problem of deciding upon its course of conduct in this conflict. Fortunately, owing to the prowess of the Ruritanian troops, the forces of Sempiternia were unable to approach

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Weissnichtwo during the first two weeks of the struggle ; and in that time the great constitutional question of Proportional Legislation on War and Peace was settled once and for all.

One-third of the Weissnichtvoters were in favour of neutrality ; one-third were in favour of resistance to the death along with the Ruritarians ; and one-third were in favour of immediate surrender to Sempiternia in order to escape from the tyranny of Ruritania. Two additional flagpoles were hastily rigged up alongside of the one original flagpole on the Weissnichtwo citadel ; and on the three poles, at exactly the same height, were hoisted the flags of Ruritania and of Sempiternia and the white flag of peace. The city treasure-chest was opened, and its contents divided into three equal parts, of which one was given to the Ruritanian party to prepare for defence against the Sempiternians, one to the Sempiternian party for similar but opposite purposes, and one to the neutrals for the preservation of neutrality. The arms in the arsenal were similarly divided. On the day when my friend left, the troops both of Ruritania and of Sempiternia were still at a considerable distance from the city, but terrific fighting was going on within the city itself between the adherents of the two countries, much complicated by the strenuous efforts of the neutralists to arrest the combatants and put a stop to the combat. The fighting raged for four days, indeed until the troops of Ruritania, having disposed of the Sempiternians, turned round and visited Weissnichtwo to restore order.

It was not until our acquaintance was well advanced that my friend from Weissnichtwo showed

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me a souvenir post card which he had received from a relative two years after this struggle. It was a picture of a very handsome and imposing monument, which was inscribed : " Sacred to the memory of Dr. U. Topian, and of seven thousand other electors of Weissnichtwo, who died fighting on different sides, but alike in defence of the imperishable principle of Proportional Legislation. *Quot homines, tot sententiae.*"





THE KNIGHT HAS A THOUSAND SIGHS

I WRITE to you, Mr. Editor, as a humble agriculturist and statesman of Five Corners, Ontario, who had his share in the great humanitarian legislative movements that took place in this country in the last year of the war and the year or two immediately following, before the soldiers got home and began voting again. I write to ask your aid in dispelling a grievous misunderstanding that seems to have grown up about what is perhaps our chief achievement, the abolishing of titles in Canada. I have been reading a lot of speeches and articles and general rubbish about this matter, and I simply can't refrain from writing to tell you the truth.

For it is all wrong, Mr. Editor, I mean all this discussion about titles in Canada. The gentlemen who are doing the discussion don't seem to know the fundamentals of what they are talking about. They don't seem to have any idea of what was really in the minds of us farmers and professors and statesmen and

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such like when we abolished titles in Canada, away back in the days when the abolishing was good. It is falling off terribly of late, Mr. Editor. In fact, we seem to be edging up to a period of disabolishing things. There seems even to be a movement for disabolishing titles.

There are people, Mr. Editor, who want to go back from the good new days to the bad old Knights. They want kind hearts (provided they are sufficiently kind to the party funds) to be rewarded with coronets, and simple faith (in the Government in power) to be sustained with Garters and purified with the Bath. They want persons who can't become members of the St. James's Club to be made Companions of St. Michael and St. George (who are dead and have no blackball about whom they shall associate with). They want earldoms for the Early Settlers, and dukedoms for the Doukhs. The whole idea is rank, Mr. Editor. And the worst of it is that these misguided persons haven't the slightest idea why titles were abolished in Canada.

Ask any Canadian, Mr. Editor, what he did to get his knighthood. You must know a knight or two ; they are still plentiful enough in the cities. They will tell you, every man Jack of them, that they never did a thing to get their knighthoods, that they didn't want a knighthood, that they knew all along that such things are absurd in this age of democracy and Rotary Clubs and everybody standing up in street cars. They will tell you that only an overwhelming sense of duty prevented them from refusing.

If you ask them what they were dutiful to, their answers will begin to differ. Most of them, however,

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begin with the King. They didn't want to hurt the King's feelings. The amount of devotion to the King that burns in the hearts of people who haven't been able to refuse to be made into knights is perfectly amazing. In fact, Mr. Editor, it is thrilling. I never realised what a beautiful thing human nature was until I started on this questionnaire on Why Did You Let Yourself Be Knighted? Men who have promoted the most appalling mining companies without a quiver will burst into tears at the idea of the King's sorrow on learning that they refuse to let him tap their bald craniums with a small sword. It seems to be an understood thing that the King never offers a knighthood to a Canadian until he has developed for him a yearning personal affection and an intense desire to have him call at least four times a year at Buckingham Palace.

Then there are the people who know that the honour of knighthood is not really offered to them personally, but feel that it is a compliment to some institution, or society, or church, or Sunday School, or municipality, or sport, of which they happen to be the president or mayor or official representative or otherwise the major-domo generally. A dentist cannot refuse a knighthood ; to do so would be disloyal to the whole fraternity of dentistry, and might cause thousands of persons to die of caries or halitosis who would be saved by learning that the King approves of dentists. A cricket-player cannot refuse a baronetcy ; it would not be cricket. A prominent Baptist cannot refuse a peerage ; there is hardly any hope of persuading the King to be immersed himself, and the next best thing is having an immersed person

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raised to the House of Lords. I even believe that if a title were offered to a Saskatchewan farmer he would be compelled to accept because of his devotion to the United Farmers of Saskatchewan ; but nobody has ever tried it. I knew a man once who was not president or mayor or drum-major or anything, and who couldn't figure out for the life of him why he was being knighted ; finally, he came to the conclusion that it was because he was a native of Bruce County, Ontario, and as such he was debarred by his loyalty to his county from refusing it, much as he yearned to do so.

There is also a third class of these loyal people—those who are loyal to their wives. “ Wouldn't be bothered with the thing myself, you know,” they tell you in a gruff whisper, “ but it pleases the Old Lady. Sort of gives her a chance to get even with Mrs. Smith-Jones and that set, you know. Wretched snobs, they always snubbed her ; so I just couldn't refuse it. And Mabel, my daughter, likes it too.” And if there isn't a wife there is always a daughter, or a mother, or at worst an elderly maiden aunt, to bask in the titular sunshine. Of course the elderly maiden aunt isn't called “ Lady Tompkins ” ; but she can always refer to “ My nephew, Sir Roderick ! ”

So you see, Mr. Editor, there is nothing voluntary about accepting a title. You just have to do it. Your King and country and church and family need you, and you've got to go. If you are drawn for a knighthood you jolly well serve your term—and it's a life term. And what a term !

* * * *

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You, of course, Mr. Editor, have never been a knight, and I suppose that at this moment you calculate there is no danger of it. Don't be too sure. And just stop and reckon up for a minute what it means.

In the first place, it means that for the rest of your life you are debarred from all ordinary human intercourse. You might as well be a bishop. Nobody will ever slap you on the back again and shout "Hello, Old Top!" when they are bumped into you by the starting of the street car. In the ordinary way of things you will not ride in a street car, because it is not dignified for a gentleman who has been tickled down the spine with the King's sword to be bumped into by vulgarians. But suppose by some accident you do find yourself in one of these popular conveyances. What will be the behaviour of the vulgarian who would otherwise, but for your title, have clapped you on the back and howled "Hello, Pete!" and begun to talk about last night's hockey game? Just as soon as he realises who you are (no, I should have said what you are), his grin will fade and be replaced by a respectful but not genial smile; his air of conviviality will give place to nicely-balanced deference, not too much and not too little, as of one who is striving after a happy medium between "God Save the King" and "A man's a man for a' that"; and he will shake your hand formally and murmur, "Good evening, Sir Peter; using the democratic limousine to-day, eh?" And you will never know whether he is joshing you or not, but the chances are that he is. And instead of stopping to talk about the hockey game he will either hurry on

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to the other end of the car for fear you may think that he is trying to toady, or else he will stop and talk about the future of the Empire and how the dear King was last time you saw him, and you will darned well know that he is trying to toady.

Then there are the expenses. It is hard to get knights to talk about this, because they are afraid of seeming niggardly or ungrateful. But if you can get one in a confidential mood, say the day after the income-tax payment, he will assure you that they are something awful. It is not merely the first cost, though that is bad enough ; but there is the upkeep. All sorts of special clothes, which are not the slightest use for golf or business purposes afterwards. A sword, which you can't use on anybody without being arrested for felonious assault. A set of gilt and jewelled things to hang round your neck or pin in your lapel. A coat-of-arms, which will have to be painted on the door of the car—and that means that you can't use a Ford because a coat-of-arms looks silly on a Ford. A portrait in oils ; a bust in marble ; a family group in oils ; a landscape of your birthplace ; a box at the opera (if any) ; a box at the horse show. And the subscriptions ! Not the ordinary amounts that ordinary people can get away with ; no, you will have to head the lists, and do it in three and four and five figures. It is not a cheap life, this knight life in Gay Toronto or Merry Montreal. Nor even in Wild Winnipeg or Vivid Vancouver.

I will not dwell on the people with whom you will have to associate after you are knighted. No more exclusiveness for you then ; no more picking and

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choosing of your friends. Knighthood is like the Rotary Club, except that you can't resign from it. All your fellow-knights are your brothers-in-arms. You will meet them everywhere, and you will have to be polite to them whether you like it or not. You will find yourself and them gravitating together wherever you go, as the cream rises to the top of the milk. Hostesses will hesitate to introduce you to that pretty young thing, Marjorie Workfast, whose father's sole title was Grand Doorkeeper of Local 261 of the Amalgamated Union of Boiler-workers and Rivet-passers ; but they will swim across the dancing-floor to make you acquainted with old Lady Sticktight, for she belongs to your social level. In a few years the chances are that you will know nobody except knights, ladies, the Governor-General, and a few bootleggers.

There are other drawbacks to title-holding. In fact, as the poet puts it, the knight has a thousand sighs. I have stated the causes of the deepest of them. The point I want to make is this, Mr. Editor. We Canadians who some years ago put a stop to the compulsory recruiting of the orders of chivalry among the people of this fair Dominion wanted to save our fellow-Canadians from these terrible sufferings. Most of us were completely disinterested. I don't suppose the King would have knighted me even if Parliament had let him ; neither would he have knighted most of the members of that Parliament. A few of us perhaps had a selfish interest in the matter. My old friend, Mr. Nickle (you remember Mr. Nickle, Mr. Editor ?) was then a rising politician. A rising politician, if he goes on rising, is pretty sure

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eventually to bump against the King's sword outstretched over his ascending head. I mean, somebody is pretty sure to offer him a title in order to head him off from some course of political action or to steer him into some other one. Mr. Nickle may have seen a knighthood, or a baronetcy, suspended over him like the sword in the old story about Damocles and Pythias. He may have, Mr. Editor ; he is a far-seeing man. But I didn't see any suspended over me, and so far as I know none of the rest who followed Mr. Nickle saw anything suspended over them. We acted for the good of our fellow-Canadians, and these people who suggest other motives are all wrong, and I want the thing cleared up. We were philanthropists, and we don't care who knows it.

* * * *

And now, Mr. Editor, if we are going to have titles again in Canada (and please don't say that I am asking for them), I have a suggestion that I want to make. I suggest that the new titles be granted to run in Ottawa only. I mean that a man may be, let us say, Sir William Lyon Mackenzie King in Ottawa, and perhaps also in Hull (so as to take in the golf clubs, etc.), and still be just our old friend plain Bill King in Toronto and North York. There is precedent for this. We have several Canadians to-day holding titles that run in the Vatican and disappear as soon as the wearers get outside. Why not the same for Ottawa ?

There is something to be said for titles in Ottawa. After all, nobody has to live there except the Governor-General, and he is used to them. And the

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conflict for social precedence is so terrific that, without some such means as titles for keeping the ambitious Ottawa ladies in order, it would be constantly leading to face-slapping and hair-pulling. They have their uses also for maintaining party discipline ; and they cost the country very little. Surely it is better to give a man a knighthood than a free charter to a million dollars worth of water-power.

I believe that a title current only in Ottawa would be almost if not quite as valuable as those that used to be legal tender all over Canada. Perhaps I may illustrate how it would work out.

I was once, Mr. Editor, a passenger in a trolley-car that ran from a point in Virginia to Washington, D.C. When I entered that trolley-car it had a sign up in the middle that read " White " on one side and " Coloured " on the other ; and the whites were duly all on one side of the sign and the coloured persons all on the other. The instant we entered the District of Columbia the sign was taken down, and the coloured ladies and gentlemen immediately moved into whatever seats were unoccupied in the hitherto white part of the car ; and I began to feel that perhaps we were all human beings together after all.

The railway cars leaving Ottawa would, under my scheme, be something like that. The instant the civic boundary was passed, the conductor or the brakeman would put his head in the door and announce, " All titles off, please ! " And those of us who had been shunned by their fellow-travellers, and had segregated themselves into one end of the car, by reason of being knights and baronets and such-like peculiars, would in an instant become ordinary

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Canadians, and we should mix with them and they with us, and we should start telling stories to one another in the smoker, and the rest of the trip would be happy and democratic. And I should be able to slap the Prime Minister on the back just as I do now, and call him "Bill," in spite of his being (in Ottawa only) Sir William Lyon Mackenzie King, Bart., K.C.M.G., P.C., D.L., D.Litt., *et al.*, etc.

The only people left out of the fraternisation would be the bishops and other clergymen. And I strongly suspect that under the stimulus of this example they too would soon start a movement for having their own titles, and their own ecclesiastical rig-out, confined to their home town. Meanwhile, of course, we ought really to have abolished their titles as well as the others.



ALOYSIUS MCTURK THE INTERNATIONAL POET

IF any readers of this volume should happen to possess information as to the whereabouts of Aloysius P. McTurk, or positive knowledge that he no longer has any whereabouts, they are earnestly requested to communicate with the author or the publishers without delay.

It is now about seven years since McTurk, confiding to me and a few other friends his unalterable determination henceforth to write nothing but pure international literature, departed from the too aggressively Canadian city of Toronto in search of a more neutral, more cosmopolitan scene in which to develop his genius. His departure was a great surprise to us all. McTurk, one of the most brilliant of the post-war graduates of the University of Prince Edward Island, had attained quite a widespread fame by three or four intensely Canadian poems, one addressed to the Malpecque oyster of his native Province, one to the Muskoka muskelonge, one to the bull-frogs of the Bay of Quinte, and one to the Toronto Fair ; and he was known to be working on an ode to the British Columbia sockeye, and one to the memory of Intendant Bigot. He had been christened by the *Manitoba Free Press* "the Minnesinger of the Marshes," and referred to by the

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Montreal Star as "a veritable voice of the Northern Spaces," and by the London *Times Literary Supplement* as "a rising star in the poetical firmament of the Eastern States." The Daughters of the Empire had given him a prize, and he had been invited to sit in the show window of a Toronto department store during Canadian Book Week. He was a coming Canadian poet. And he had written an essay proving that the poetry of his own Prince Edward Island was naturally and inevitably superior to that of all the rest of Canada because the other Provinces were too large to inspire great verse. Poetry, he declared, is always parochial; Troy was about the size of Charlottetown, and its siege gave rise to more and better poetry than the whole Americo-German War of 1917.

And now, as he explained it to us, he suddenly perceived that he had been all wrong. Great literature could never be Torontonion, or Canadian, or even North American or British Empyrean or League-of-Nationalistic, or English-Speaking-Unionist. It must be international; it must be supernational; it must be free from all taint of local or racial limitation; it must proceed out of the Universe, and be addressed at least to the Entire World. He was going to be a cosmic poet, and chant his song to the Spheres. Mankind was to be his public. He was not sure who was to be his publisher, but he had hopes of Knopf.

He had it all planned out. The first thing was to emancipate himself from his Canadianism. He had picked on an island in the middle of the St. Lawrence, which under the Treaty of 1871 was an international

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river, and here he settled down to become a truly international man. (He found out later that the St. Lawrence was only internationalised as between Canada and the United States and did not belong to the rest of the world, so he tried Geneva, and then Monte Carlo, and Port Said, and Wrangel Island, and Liberia, and a lot of other places.) He gave up the reading of all Canadian and British literature, explaining that he had been too much exposed to that kind of thing in his youth, and immersed himself in Confucius and the "Zend Avesta" and the "Shastras" and the "No Drama" and the "Nibelungs" and the "Book of Mormon" and Mrs. Annie Besant.

He decided also that he would have to give up writing in English, because that language inevitably gave his thoughts a certain nationalistic trend. He thought for a while of adopting Erse, but concluded that even that tongue was susceptible of nationalistic feeling, and finally fell back on Esperanto, a language which, as he justly pointed out, had no particular body of ideas, no special theory of life, no peculiar attitude of mind associated with it.

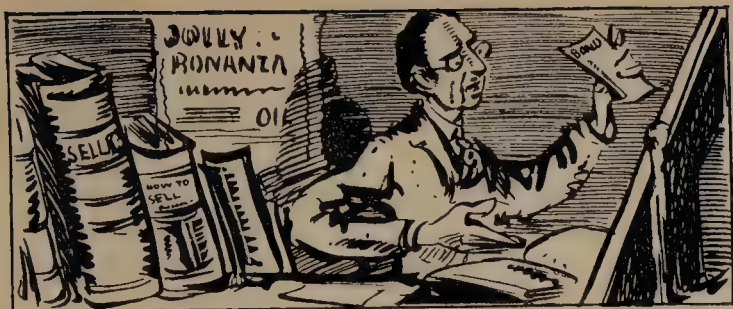
Last spring there reached me from a post-office on the northern edge of Tibet a letter, written by Aloysius McTurk, and a very fat parcel of manuscript. The letter, dated many months earlier, stated that the writer had at last completed, and was forwarding to me, a great epic poem which he believed to be completely free from all Canadian or other nationalistic vices and limitations. There could, he perceived, be no public for such a work in this generation, and I was therefore to entrust it to the vaults of the Bank

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of Montreal to be held in secrecy for fifty years, unseen by any eyes, including even my own. Safety deposit rental fee was enclosed. It was then to be submitted to a committee consisting of the presidents of various great literary bodies, such as the French Academy, the Chinese Board of Civil Service Examiners, the Canadian Authors Association, and others, who were either to arrange for its publication or to put it back in storage for another fifty years, as they saw fit.

But the Tibet postal authorities are a suspicious crowd, and thinking doubtless that McTurk was sending priceless secrets out of the country, they had opened up the parcel, and put it together again very badly. Even as I picked it up, after reading the letter, it fell apart in my hand, and I could not help seeing that scores of its sheets of paper were blank. Impelled by irresistible curiosity I examined the entire package. Every sheet was blank except that which bore, in imposing Esperanto capitals, the inscription : "Collected Works of Aloysius P. McTurk, International Poet."

I at once wrote to "Aloysius P. McTurk, International Poet, Tibet," but have received no reply. It is of course possible that somewhere in the library of some Tibetan postal official there reposes the unique copy, in the original Esperanto, but minus its title-page, of the life work of McTurk, and that the blank sheets were substituted for the manuscript before it crossed the Tibetan border. But . . . I wonder.



THE JOLLY-BONANZA SALESMAN

JOHAN HENRY STRONGETTER and Eustace Percy Mildrose roomed together in the great North American seat of learning, Rollemforth University. They had been rooming together for five years. Each of them was about to get a degree. Each of them maintained that if he had roomed with anybody else except his actual room-mate he could have got that degree in four years without half trying, but temptation due to the other's presence had delayed his academic progress. In this each was entirely wrong and grievously unjust to his friend. Neither of them would ever have got through the B.A. course at Rollemforth University in less than five years if there hadn't been another student in the place.

John Henry was a youth of strong will and a profound disinclination to do any work. Eustace Percy was a youth of reasonably good intellect and a profound inability to make up his mind. As a team they were good. John Henry decided that they

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would study the courses that were easiest to study, and Eustace Percy, having his mind thus made up for him, studied them. He kept John Henry reasonably close behind him, academically speaking, by imparting to him in simplified and tabulated and digested form the essentials of the learning he was himself acquiring. John Henry kept Eustace Percy from getting too far in front of him by refusing to decide what they were to study next until he was good and ready.

There are certain illusions that survive even five years of university instruction. One of these is the illusion that it is possible to learn anything from books. Eustace Percy and John Henry still laboured under this illusion. But only to one of them was it a serious error. Eustace Percy thought, not only that it was possible to learn from books, but that he himself could do such learning, which made the error much more dangerous, by transferring it from the realm of pure speculation into that of active practical application. John Henry, on the other hand, knew that no matter how much other people might possibly be able to learn from books, he personally couldn't learn a thing. He had acquired this important piece of knowledge from five years of hard experience. Everything that he had learnt had been hammered into him by a professor or a tutor or a coach or a fellow-student or an automobile accident or something like that. In other words, John Henry had derived some benefit from his university course and Eustace Percy hadn't, as this little tale is intended to show.

On a bright day in early summer, John Henry

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Strongetter and Eustace Percy Mildrose emerged from Rollemforth University with the first fresh bloom of a baccalaureate degree still peach-like upon them. They emerged together, simultaneously baccalaureated, simultaneously turned loose upon the world. They were, in fact, academic twins. Rollemforth is one of those universities where, to save time, the Principal or President or whatever he is operates on two degree candidates at the same time, one with the left hand and one with the right, so that they rise up Bachelors of Arts at the same identical moment, although the spectators always think (until they get used to it) that he is going to knock their heads together instead. John Henry and Eustace Percy knelt down and rose up together. They were at the end of a long list. Both of them got 41 per cent. in most of the obligatory subjects ; it takes 40 per cent. to get a degree.

On the day when they left college John Henry and Eustace Percy both decided, quite correctly, that the only way to make money nowadays when you haven't any to begin with is to sell things you haven't got to people who don't want them. So they started out to enter the Selling Life. But as their methods were going to be entirely different they decided not to start together. John Henry went straight down to the Buller Mush people's office and registered for a job.

Eustace Percy went down town and bought three large books on Salesmanship. They were, so the bookstore man assured him, the best books, and they were frightfully expensive. In fact, the bookstore got two dollars commission on each just for selling them.

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Taking up the smallest one, Eustace began to study it. It was called "How to Land the Customer." It was written by Gabriel Horn Coldfish, Ph.D., D.Com., D.Paed.

"The first thing to be borne in mind in selling any article," began Dr. Coldfish, "is that it is absolutely and imperatively necessary for the seller to have an implicit belief in the virtues of the thing he is selling. This belief can be acquired by determination and practice.

"Start out with the conviction firmly implanted in your mind that the thing you are selling is good ; nay more, that it is the best of its kind, and that it is indispensable to the person to whom you propose to sell it.

"Faith is the Foundation of Salesmanship. Show me the man who can believe in anything, and I will show you the man who can sell anything.

"Regard yourself as the Missionary of a Cause, rather than the mere purveyor of a commodity.

"To acquire this mental attitude, it is a good thing to go through certain mental gymnastics at morning and evening. This can be done simultaneously with your physical gymnastics, so that the muscles of your soul and of your body can be strengthened at the same time. Do not think of nothing while you are doing your Daily Dozen, or punching the bag, or pulling yourself up and down on the transom of the door. To do so is to waste time. Say to yourself, once with each movement of the exercise, 'Simpkins' Soap is the best in the world ! Simpkins' Soap is the best in the world !' After five minutes of this you will find that you can

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believe it much more readily than you did at first. You may then proceed to enlarge the concept. Introduce the thought of the client or prospect. 'You — need — Simpkins' Soap ! You — need — Simpkins' Soap !' And so on, a dozen or twenty or even fifty times, always with a strong accent on the 'you.' And finally, to complete the figure of the mystic triangle of commerce ('A sells B to C'), recite to yourself as loudly as the circumstances permit : 'I am Selling you Simpkins' Soap !' And with a mind thus fortified, with an invigorated faith, you can go forth to your daily round, and no prospect in your town or county will be able to resist you."

This did not seem difficult to Eustace Percy, so he forthwith applied for the position of salesman on the staff of the brokerage firm of Wangle & Wangle, which was then distributing the stock of the Jolly-Bonanza Oil and Gold Fields Limited. He got the position. Never believe it when people tell you that college graduates cannot secure positions. No matter if you are a university graduate, I will undertake to secure you a position as salesman for the Wangle & Wangle people at an hour's notice. I admit, however, that university graduates usually get only 50 per cent. commission on their sales, while harder-boiled persons get as high as 60 and even 75.

The first morning after his appointment Eustace Percy rose early and practised his faith-training. First he read a chapter of Coldfish. Then he hung up a Jolly-Bonanza poster in front of the elastic exerciser, and with each pull of the elastic he took a deep breath and said to himself very earnestly, "Jolly-Bonanza is the best oil stock in the world."

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At breakfast the steak was tough. On any other occasion he would have complained (not to the landlady, Oh no ; but at least to one of his fellow-boarders). But to-day he found that the exercise of the jaws upon a piece of tough steak was the best thing in the world for intensifying faith. His mind was saying "Jolly-Bonanza" while his teeth were champng—one accented syllable to each champ. His landlady asked him whether he was feeling well, and said that his expression was queer ; but he scarcely heard her.

On the way down town to sell stock he made himself a little poem which seemed to lend a new and livelier rhythm to his walk.

I believe in Jolly-Bonanza,
I believe in Jolly-Bonanza,
I believe in Jolly-Bonanza
—OIL !

He walked into the office—the outer office—of his first "prospect" with his head in the air and his teeth set, whistling "Jolly-Bonanza" as he marched.

The first prospect kept him waiting eighteen minutes. He felt his faith perceptibly diminishing as the time passed. He wondered whether Coldfish said anything about how to keep up the steam pressure while cooling one's heels in an outer office. Somehow he had not thought about outer offices when practising his faith. Perhaps faith was like tea ; it should be poured out and drunk within a few minutes of infusing, if you wanted to get the real delicate flavour. At any rate, it should certainly not be stood in a draught.

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After the eighteen minutes the prospect sent for him, and having got him into the inner office proceeded to tell him that he was working for the highest-powered bunch of piratical crooks in the stock-selling game in the whole United States of America. Did Eustace Percy know anything about their last previous flotation and what had happened to it? Eustace Percy didn't know a thing. The prospect proceeded to tell him. And these things being so, did Eustace Percy think it was any kind of a thing to do, to come into a man's office and try to sell him a new stock manufactured by these same notorious pirates? Eustace Percy admitted feebly that it did not seem as if it was.

After that it appeared desirable to go home and find out what Coldfish had to say about such a situation. But it turned out that Coldfish hadn't anything to say. According to Coldfish, anything that was ever sold or ever could be sold by anybody to anybody was good enough to put faith in, if you happened to be employed for selling it. And you could develop faith in anything if you only went at it in the right way, with the Coldfish exercises.

So Eustace turned to the second book, which was entitled "How to Clinch the Sale," and was written by Jeremiah Roth, Emeritus Dean of the Sales Department of the American Soft Soaps Corporation. Mr. Roth, it appeared from the preface, was known to his business associates as "the arch-priest of Salesmanship." In a famous debate on the question: "Resolved, that Salesmanship will supersede the existing forms of religion," he had successfully maintained the negative, by proving that instead of

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superseding them it would incorporate them into itself.

“Some so-called authorities,” said Mr. Roth, “lay much stress upon the mental attitude of the Salesman, and insist that he should have a personal belief in the efficacy or excellence of the goods that he sells. This is a complete error, analogous to the error of those who maintain that the actor must himself experience the emotions and passions that he is depicting on the stage. It is, moreover, essentially belittling to the incomparable art of Salesmanship.

“To the true Salesman the zest of battle, the conflict of personalities which issues in the victory of the Sale, is the only thing that matters. It makes no difference to him whether the goods are good or not, nor whether the buyer needs them or has no use for them. In fact, the Salesman Genius would rather sell an inferior article than a better one, would rather sell to a man who does not want the thing than to one who does ; because doing so calls out more of the powers of Salesmanship that are in him. Incidentally, we may add that the harder the thing is to sell, the higher is the rate of commission to the seller.

“Just as the good actor cons and learns his part, so the good salesman will memorise and practise his lines, rehearsing them hour after hour with every variety of intonation until he gets the precise effect that he wants, and after that he will find that he will have the client at his mercy. Know your patter, and know every little detail of the way in which you intend to deliver it ; then go ahead and let nothing interrupt you. You cannot fail to sell.”

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This obviously explained the whole thing. Eustace Percy had relied on faith rather than formula ; he had started out without any patter and without any rehearsals. All would now be changed. Throwing Coldfish out of the window into the garden (from which he retrieved it a few minutes later on the reflection that when he was a good salesman he would be able to sell even a second-hand Coldfish), he sat down to write a libretto for the selling of Jolly-Bonanza Oil. What better subject could he have to work upon ? Here was obviously a very bad stock, which most people knew to be bad. If he could sell Jolly-Bonanza to people who knew how rotten Jolly-Bonanza was, then there was no doubt about it ; he was—that is to say, he would be—well, at any rate, he hoped he would be—a first-class salesman.

Not for nothing was Eustace Percy a graduate in Honour English and one of the leading dramatists of the Wig and Buskin Society of his college. In less than two days he turned out a monologue for the selling of Jolly-Bonanza that would have made old Jeremiah Roth glow with pride. In another day he had worked out all the persuasive intonations, the compelling gestures, the appropriate flash of the eye and grip of the hand, that were to play upon the emotions of the client until he no longer knew what he was doing or why he shouldn't do it.

Declaiming his monologue in a low tone and gesticulating with his stock subscription book,

Eustace Percy headed for down town. The passers-by gave him ample space as he walked ; they thought he was either insane or a street preacher. Some small

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boys followed him for a couple of blocks, but no fun developed and they ran off after a hospital ambulance. With a manner modelled upon that of Sir Henry Irving going on the stage as Macbeth, he walked into the office of one of the hardest nuts in the city, a prosperous and stern-hearted coal merchant. The coal merchant happened to be a patron of one of the city's "little theatres," and the office-boy, thinking that Eustace Percy was an amateur Thespian, let him into the sanctum. The thing is working, thought Eustace.

"In these days of the rapid growth of wealth and the astonishing rise in the standard of living," he began—"in these days of national rivalries, intensified a thousand times by the aftermath of the Great War, there is no task more urgently compelling, more worthy of the attention of the broad-minded and public-spirited citizen, than . . .

"What other conclusion can we possibly draw from all these facts that I have summarily indicated. . . .

"Glance for a moment at the long list of men whose fame and whose fortunes have been built upon a single adventurous enterprise in the realm of mineral research ; who by the happy issue of a stroke of the pen have. . . .

"But why need I say more ? . . ."

The coal merchant, who had been signing letters with a large and very squeaky pen, looked up at this juncture.

"What the blank in blank of blank blank blankishness have you said already ? " he inquired. "What in the name of Moses and the eleven bulrushes are you talking about ? "

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This was not in the libretto at all. Indeed, I have mentioned that what Eustace Percy had composed was a monologue, not a dialogue. It included no replies to such questions, because it included no such questions. Desperately he cast back for a fresh start. "Why need I say more?" he began again.

"You needn't," said the coal merchant, firmly but not unkindly. And then quite loudly, "John."

John was the office-boy. He entered.

"How did this get in? Show it out."

Eustace withdrew, slowly and awkwardly, because there was nothing in the libretto about a withdrawal at this juncture. At the door he paused. His mind was again beginning to act freely.

"May I ask you one question, sir?" he said.

The coal merchant nodded. He had very bushy eyebrows, and when he nodded they waved ferociously.

"What is the matter with my sales talk, sir? Will you please tell me."

The coal merchant gasped. His face became apoplectic. His eyebrows seemed to reach out like the tentacles of a cuttlefish. Eustace fled.

But there was still a third book on Salesmanship, and Eustace hurried home to see whether it was like the other two or different. It was called "The Will in Retail Commerce," and it was written by Siegmund Adelfreud (of Vienna and Los Angeles), one time Fellow of the College of Hypnosis of Paris, author of "Auto-Suggestion and the Four-Wheel Brake," "Mind and Never Mind," and "How Psychology Won the War." The second chapter was entitled "The Great Silent Man."

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“Success in life,” observed Herr Adelfreud, “consists in making other people do what you want them to do. It is not difficult, provided you want them to do so with sufficient intensity. Cultivate your powers of desire. Do not scatter them upon an ever-changing variety of subjects, because that will dissipate their energy ; but having chosen some object or some achievement which you feel you can desire intensely enough, devote yourself to raising the power of your wish until it becomes an over-mastering force, sweeping all obstacles before it. How did Napoleon conquer Europe ? By wishing to do so. How did Rockefeller acquire wealth ? By invincible desire for it. How does Billy Sunday save sinners ? By yearning passionately for their salvation.

“Whatever may be your walk in life, this tremendous force is at your disposal and may be applied for your benefit. But in no type of business activity is it more useful than in salesmanship. Only *desire* strongly enough that your client shall give you the order that you are after, and he will do it. He cannot protect himself against the irresistible force of your will. Don’t talk to him ; you will only distract his attention from the effect of the impact of your mind upon his. A few suggestive phrases—the word ‘sign’ uttered in a commanding tone, the gesture of handing a pen, the holding of a sample of your product before his eyes—these power-conveying and significant things are good. But argument is a waste of time. Napoleon never argued. Fix the client with your eye. Keep your mind on the objective. *Will* him to do as you desire. He cannot resist you.”

If Eustace Percy had stayed to read a little further,

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he would have learned that a true Napoleonic will can only be developed by long practice, and especially by the perusal of Herr Adelfreud's other two works, "Willing Your Will" and "Feeding the Will-Glands." But he was in too much of a hurry to try out the new recipe. Off he went down town again.

On the way down he met John Henry Strongetter. He had not seen John Henry since the Principal had declared them graduates of Rollemforth University and rapped them on the head with a tasselled cap. A dazzling thought struck him. If he could will John Henry into buying a hundred shares of Jolly-Bonanza he would not only make a nice little commission, but he would also be demonstrating to his old college chum that the books on salesmanship really were "the goods."

They met in the middle of a crossing over a rather busy street. He buttonholed John Henry and stopped him then and there. The automobiles whizzed past them on both sides, those going west flicking John Henry's overcoat-tails, those going east fanning the overcoat-tails of Eustace Percy.

He pulled John Henry close to him, and looked him in the eye, with what he thought was a mesmeric gaze. John Henry looked a little mystified, but supposed that Eustace was going to ask him the way to such-and-such a street, or to the So-and-So Building.

"Jolly-Bonanza Oil Means Millions," hissed Eustace, still fixing John Henry with that peculiar gaze.

"I'll say she does," said John Henry. But he did not mean to convey any assent to Eustace's proposition.

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Among the graduates of Rollemforth University that formula is employed to keep the conversation going until further light develops. It is equivalent to saying "Tell me more, before I commit myself."

"Now is the time to buy," went on Eustace, and waved a certificate for ten shares before John Henry's astonished face. He avoided letting the certificate come between John Henry's eyes and his own, because he was fixing John Henry with a one-hundredth-Napoleon-power gaze. I have omitted to mention that Eustace had light blue eyes and a sandy complexion. When he was excited—and now that he was working his will extra hard he was tremendously excited—the eyes bugged out until they looked like rather cheap marbles.

"Now—buy—now—buy—Go—high—go—high," continued Eustace, selecting, as the book had told him to do, the significant words, the words with punch. And intently he glared into John Henry's countenance.

"That's a rotten poem," said John Henry. "Try it over on your saxophone, old bean. It needs more jazz."

Apparently the good old will-power was not working fast enough. If he was not quicker, John Henry would escape. Already he could feel a pull on the overcoat-button in his fingers. His mind went back to the hypnotic performances which he had attended in his childhood. What was it the hypnotist had done? Oh yes. He stepped back from John Henry in order to get more room to wave his arms and do the "passes."

"Jolly-Bonanza," he hissed between his teeth. And

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then, amid long slow wavings of the hands, "You—are—in—my—power. I—will—you——"

But at that moment an east-bound automobile bowled Eustace Percy Mildrose over briskly and carried him half a block down the street. John Henry, who was not at all hypnotised, followed and gathered him up, and after feeling him all over decided that he was not seriously damaged.

"What on earth were you trying to do?" he asked.

"I—I was willing you to buy some Jolly-Bonanza stock," faltered Eustace. "The book said that that was the best way to sell stock. Don't you think it is?"

John Henry Strongetter emitted a snort of laughter. "Way to sell stock, nothing!" he ejaculated. "There's only one way to sell things, and that's sell 'em. Just sell 'em. Look at me! Never read a book on Salesmanship in my life, and I'm city agent for the Buller Mush people and made \$438.70 last week, with Friday off. That reminds me. I need a clerk and bookkeeper. Come in with me and I'll give you eighteen dollars a week to start with, and two more as soon as you're worth it. For the sake of old Rollemforth and the class of 1925."

"All right," said Eustace Percy faintly. "I'm sold."



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SOCIETY, as practised in the countries and circles in which I move, is a game. Most of the people who play it are aware of the fact. It is not a trade or business. Nor is it a religion, though there are certainly some people who think it is. It is not a necessity ; there are people who do not practise it and yet seem to live and flourish, which is not true of eating, breathing and talking. It is not even a moral duty, like adding to the population (if you feel that it needs adding to) or not adding to it (if you feel that it needs reducing), or like denouncing a murderer, or protecting a bootlegger. We are not compelled to practise it, we are not under any obligation to practise it, and yet somehow the vast majority of us do practise it, and with more or less devotion and enthusiasm.

But Society as a game suffers gravely from the lack of certain elements which have been provided in the case of practically all other human sports, and which could perfectly well be provided in the case of Society if only we would recognise its true character. The game of Society has been almost completely neglected in the modern process of providing uniform standardised and international rules for the governing of the play. It is almost as chaotic as football was

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when it was played in the streets of London between teams consisting of all the people who happened to be at one end of the street and all those who happened to be at the other, and the only rule was that the person who broke a window was declared "out" if the owner of the window hit him on the head hard enough to render him senseless.

What the game of Society needs is an international authority to lay down rules and manage tournament play—something like the authority, whatever it is, that runs the tennis at Wimbledon or the chess at Rio de Janeiro or the poi-eating at Honolulu—something that could award a world championship and squash anybody who protested. It would increase the popularity of the game and remove a great many of the present misunderstandings about it. It would tend to the development of a better style of play. It would protect the amateur and at the same time give the professional his due. It would—in short, it would do so many things that I am perfectly willing to serve on the committee. And as a start towards getting it going I have compiled a brief and sketchy summary of the rules which I consider desirable, and which I shall propose for adoption as soon as the committee is formed. I do not claim that these rules are perfect, but they have been drawn up after consultation with a number of the leading authorities on the game, who are all agreed as to the desirability of standardisation. They include Col. the Hon. Redtape Fussifax, A.D.C., arbiter of elegances at the viceregal court of Blanktown, Mrs. Paragraph Pushin, editor of the society column of the "Canadian Daily Blast," Miss

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Harthouse Culyer, M.A., principal of the St. Anglia School for Young Ladies, the Hon. Rupert Remittance, secretary of the Mausoleum Club, and several others of equal experience and judgment. It is the earnest hope of the compiler that when they have been tried out and proved in practice these rules will be adopted, with any modifications that may be found necessary, and that the present chaotic condition of the game, giving rise as it does to so many misunderstandings and squabbles, will become a thing of the past.

So loosely has the game of Society been played in Canada of recent years, and with so little understanding of its fine qualities, that a vast number of the participants are not even aware of the fundamental object of the play. Yet that object is perfectly simple. Each player strives to keep up social relations with the opposing player, always continuing to comply with all the rules of the game, until the opposing player is placed in the position of being compelled to violate one or other of these rules or abandon the game. This scores a point, or in some cases several points, to the player who is still "in play." The game goes on more or less continuously between all the qualified players in a given city, town or district ; and the player who without ever violating a rule succeeds in compelling all the opponents to do so becomes the champion of the district, and is known as the Leader of Society. It is impossible to appreciate the fine points of the game until one has actually played it ; but those who have played it for years are unanimous in maintaining that there is no sport to be compared with it, either for interest or for its effect on the development of character.

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There is reason to believe that Society, as originally played in Canada, was a "mixed doubles" game, played by teams consisting of one male and one female player, technically known as Husband and Wife. There are some interesting survivals of this old form of the game, both in its present terminology, and in some of the more formal plays which are still occasionally seen in tournaments, such as the "Grand Dinner" and the "Viceregal Reception." But for the most part the game has been completely abandoned by the male sex, who are kept busy providing their female partners with the funds for the purchase of the implements. All the best play is now found in the class of Ladies' Singles, for there are not more than a dozen men in Canada who are sufficiently good players to take a hand without impairing the quality and speed of the action. One of the survivals is to be seen in the rule requiring the female player, even in a singles game, to act in certain respects as if she had a partner who was actually participating in the proceedings ; but this partner, or Husband, never has to be produced, and the present writer can recall many cases where there was no evidence whatever that he really existed—a fact which made no difference to the effectiveness of the supposed Wife's play.

* * * *

The only essential implements of the game are a knowledge of the rules and a pack of visiting-cards (male and female) ; but, as in the case of golf, there are many accessories which are permitted by the rules and which greatly improve the standard of play. The cards, like golf balls, should be the best that you

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can afford, as the better the card the more likely you are to score. This refers not only to the pasteboard and engraving, but also to the address printed upon them. It is not absolutely necessary that the player should live at the address thus printed, although in smaller cities and towns it is certainly desirable. The cards may be played by hand, or delivered with a Ford car ; but your game will be much more successful if you use a Rolls-Royce limousine with a coloured chauffeur, at least for the opening deliveries. It is again not absolutely necessary that the player should *own* the Rolls-Royce.

The game begins with an Opening Service, or Delivery of Cards. There is apparently no limit to the number or class of persons who can enter the game, nor is there any notice or entrance fee exacted at this stage, other than the cost of the pasteboards. The only rule governing the Service is that the Server must have resided in the district longer than the person served ; the server is technically known as the Caller, and the person served as the Callee. The residence rule is rigid and allows of no exceptions. Even at an advanced stage of the play, if it should be discovered that the original service was faulty by reason of violation of this rule, the game can be stopped and the whole score goes to the Callee.

The opening service of cards should be delivered in such a way that the recipient or Callee will feel compelled, either by curiosity, or by ambition, or by human sympathy or hate or jealousy or any other motive whatsoever, to deliver a service of her own cards in return. This, as a matter of fact, is not difficult, for the Opening Service very rarely fails for

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any other reason than the compelling one just mentioned, namely, violation of the residence rule. The motive of curiosity alone is so great that the Callee almost invariably returns the delivery, although the manner of the return varies greatly. A prompt return shows that the opening service has been efficient and well placed, and that the recipient has been put at a slight social disadvantage, or feels somewhat outplayed by the server. A greatly delayed return, on the other hand, is almost the same thing as a refusal to return at all, and means that the service has been a failure, and that the server might as well drop out of the game.

One reason for the almost universal policy of returning First Calls is undoubtedly the fact that the score for "snubbing," as it is called, is much less in the first round than in later stages. The exact figure varies according to locality, and a uniform practice is greatly to be desired ; the present author suggests that the snubbing of a First Caller should be scored only one point, that of a Once-Dinner-Guest two points, and that of an Intimate Friend five to ten points, according to circumstances. Under these rules, the Recipient will in almost all cases sacrifice the certainty of one point for the prospect of getting a higher score later on.

* * * *

The great majority of the scoring, or snubbing, in Society is done after the Return Call. In fact, the sole serious argument in favour of not returning the First Call is the possibility that the First Call itself may be merely a feint, which the player has no

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intention of following up. It is the easiest thing in the world to roll up a large score of "snubs" by paying First Calls on everybody who comes to the city, luring these unfortunate newcomers into returning the calls, and then dropping them into the discard. But among the sportier players this is regarded as rather a mean and niggling little game, and the original service is always continued into a three- or four-stroke rally.

Let us now pause for a moment to consider the position of the player who has been "snubbed" in or after the opening round of the play. She is, as we have seen, out of the game, so far as that entry is concerned. Moreover, she is probably out of the game, so far as that particular opponent is concerned, "for keeps." In rare instances, in which the player's "stance" or some other element of her play has been materially improved in the interval (by the inheritance of a million dollars, for example, or by the writing of a successful scandalous novel), a second service has been known to achieve the results that the first had failed in. But as a rule a player who had delivered fifty or sixty Opening Service cards with little or no result will be wasting her efforts if she delivers cards again to the same players a year or two later. What then can she do? If she remove to some other community she becomes for a time the junior player, and cannot even deliver a Service upon anybody until somebody newer than herself arrives. If she remain at home there are several possibilities. The best method is to try the next lower grade of players—since failure in the first entries shows that she has been aiming above her powers. In every community there

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are several distinct grades of players, which usually keep quite apart one from the other. Thus, after the failure of an opening service in Grade A, it is often possible to make a successful entry into Grade B or C. There is as yet no official classification of players, except in the very highest ranks of champions and runners-up, and it is greatly to be desired that there should be. But the approximate grade of the players is roughly indicated by divisions known as "churches." Thus the members of the Church of —— will rank on the average as Grade A players, those of the —— Church as Grade B, and so on; while members of "Missions" and "Gospel Halls" come almost entirely under the head of Grades M or N. If you know what church a player belongs to, you can fix with approximate accuracy her rank in the game of Society. If you know the church but do not know what grade it stands for, it is usually possible to ascertain by attending a service; the more frigid and silent the congregation, the higher the grade of the players belonging to it—always bearing in mind that the noise made by the choir and clergyman (who are paid to vociferate) does not count. The only question that will cause any trouble is the position of persons who have no religious affiliations. A few years ago it would have been impossible for such persons to play the game of Society with any success; but to-day there are a few highly accomplished players who owe part of their technique to their irreligion.

Let us now return to the case where the First Call and the Return Call have been played, and both players remain in the game to play for a higher-

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scoring snub in a later round. This may be achieved in different ways. Very cautious players stick to the "call" stroke for several rounds, and a game may go on for years without ever leading to any more intimate conflict than a periodic exchange of calls at intervals of three to twelve months. But there is no chance of rolling up a fat score by this method, and good players always break into a faster style of play after the two preliminary strokes.

It is above all things important that the opponent's suspicion should be lulled to rest just before the final killing stroke is to be delivered, since any stroke except the plain "call" may be parried for the moment by the simple device of the "Previous Engagement."

Strokes are divided into two classes, "calls" and "invitations." As we have seen, the two first strokes must be "calls," but after that the game tends naturally, if at all speedy, to develop into an exchange of "invitations." Each player is absolutely required to return an "invitation," provided it has been delivered in lawful fashion, and failure to do so means the loss of the round, with the opponent scoring whatever the particular type of play may entitle her to.

The rule defining a "lawful invitation" varies greatly in different localities, and urgently needs unification and clarification. It is universally agreed that the invitation to entitle the inviter to score must be delivered a reasonable number of days before the event, and in a certain prescribed form; but the form and the exact number of days vary widely. It may be that some variation is inevitable, and that this is a matter which should be left to be determined

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by local or "grounds" rules rather than by general legislation. It is also universally agreed that the invitation must be an "original"; that is to say, that the opponent is entitled to ignore any invitation that is not issued at the same time as all the other invitations to the same "shine," "party" or entertainment. A belated invitation is equivalent to an admission that somebody has dropped out, and that the invited guest is merely a second thought, a substitute, a filler-in. The recipient may lawfully refuse it without incurring any obligation, and if she accepts it and goes and plays bridge or eats dinner as a substitute for some previously invited guest, she is not only incurring no obligation for herself but is actually placing her hostess under an obligation. This obligation must however be claimed at the time, by the utterance of a prescribed formula or a slight variation therefrom. "So glad to be able to help you out, dear," is an effective notification to the hostess that the guest knows she is a substitute, and that no score will be allowed for this invitation.

* * * *

The whole object of the play in these more advanced stages is to manœuvre the opponent into accepting an invitation for a "shine" of such high scoring rank that she will not be able to return it properly. As in the old unstandardised days of Mah Jong, there is a good deal of uncertainty as to the exact value of the various different kinds of entertainment, but the general principles are clear enough and are universally recognised. The aim of these articles is to pave the way towards a uniform valuation of "shines" in all

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parts of Canada, so that players of the game of Society will always know just what score they are entitled to and what kind of reply any given stroke calls for. Certain local or "grounds" variations will, of course, always be inevitable. Thus a dinner with cocktails must be given a much higher credit in Prohibition territory than elsewhere ; but even here the scoring value must be kept within reason. My own feeling is that a good cocktail of the modern large size should be regarded as doubling the score ; the value of three doubles, which is ascribed to it in Kansas, Wisconsin and other interior states, seems unreasonably high.

The elements which make up the score of an invitation "shine" in Canada are fully as various as those of a Mah Jong hand, and very similar in character. The food, the drinks, the service, the conversation, and the subsequent paragraph in the society column, all have their points. Unlike Mah Jong, however, the game includes a large number of minus scores, which must be deducted from the total of plus scores to get the net result ; and I have myself attended many functions the score value of which was considerably less than nothing.

It will perhaps be best to take up the subject of these minus scores first. Most of them come under the heading of "guests." The presence of relatives from the country (which means from any place smaller in population than that in which the game is being played) takes off ten points per relative, with an additional ten if deaf, addicted to social reform (especially if objecting to smoking by ladies), or over sixty years of age. University professors, missionaries (unless partially eaten by cannibals), and ministers of

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religion of lower social rank than a dean, score minus five. Bond salesmen and insurance agents deduct five, and it is no longer considered necessary to wait and see whether they try to sell anything before making the deduction. Certain combinations of elements which are harmless when taken separately are serious drawbacks when together. To put a Church Unionist and an Anti-Church Unionist at the same table costs five points, and the same is true of Christian Scientists and medical practitioners. Many people seem to think that there is a penalty for mixing a Prohibitionist and a bootlegger, but there is no such rule ; the two get along admirably together. The same is true of Prohibitionists and native wine growers.

The deductions for tepid soup and warm ice-cream are well known and need no comment. But many players seem to be unaware of the severe penalties for certain forms of miscalled "entertainment." Hosts who insist on playing the phonograph lose ten points per record for everything except dance music, and this score is doubled if they say "hush" during the performance. There is a severe penalty for insisting on a game of lower social rank than that which the guests wish to play ; thus the host who insists on five hundred when the guests want auction bridge loses twenty points. The rank of the leading games, beginning with the lowest, is as follows : Rummy, five hundred, euchre, whist, auction bridge, contract bridge, with Mah Jong at the head of the list in places like Prince Edward Island and Kingston, Ont., and at the foot elsewhere. There is also a penalty for playing without stakes when the guests want to play

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for "corners," and for playing "corners" when the guests want to play for "points."

The plus scores are practically uniform and will cause no trouble. The dinner is computed at three points per course, which accounts for the passionate desire of hostesses to add small fancy courses; but naturally only those courses are counted which are entirely successful. The value of each guest is exactly proportionate to the amount of newspaper space that he is worth at the moment, and in case of dispute it can be ascertained by referring to any good city editor. Players should be careful not to allow the hostess a higher score than necessary because of a guest's prominence in the past; it is only his present value that counts. Thus, a bank director may be worth three points while ostensibly honest, one hundred points during his trial, and nothing at all after he gets out of jail. The latest convicted murderer, or person known to be guilty of murder but not convicted, is the highest score in the game, but is obviously very hard to get; but as soon as a newer murderer comes along his value goes down with great rapidity. Certain functionaries score little in themselves, but can be doubled many times by special circumstances. A bishop is ordinarily worth only three points, but a bigamous bishop would be the limit.

The player who is invited to a "shine" which she suspects may score beyond her power to return it should evade the play by calling out "previous engagement." This has the effect of scoring against her, not the full value of the entertainment, but only the fixed value for an unaccepted "dinner," "bridge,"

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“tea,” or “theatre party” or “dance” as the case may be. These scores are comparatively small as against what may be piled up by a particularly good hand in “dinner” or “dance” if played out. The “previous engagement” is strictly a defensive play, and is never resorted to except for the purpose of slowing the game down when one of the players thinks it is getting too dangerously lively. The “previous engagement” pleader is obliged to return the play, and must return it in the same form, a dinner for a dinner invitation and so on, but there is no huge score to be equalled and therefore the return may be on a very moderate scale. The original inviter must then invite once more in turn, and the defensive player may reply by a “previous engagement” for a second time. On the third reply of “previous engagement” the “no yards” rule applies as in football, and the defensive player is declared “out.”



MAKING STUDENTS BROWN

THE Dean of that admirable educational institution in the United States which is known as Brown University has been discussing the functions of universities, and declaring that the matter taught in them is relatively unimportant "when compared with the human problem of developing character in the students." It does not matter, I take it, what intellectual accomplishments the young men at Brown University acquire ; but it does matter that they should have their characters developed in the way in which Brown University thinks characters ought to be developed. They may learn anything or nothing else ; but they must learn to be Brown.

We have heard a great deal lately about this business of developing character in students, and I note that in such discussions the word "develop" is always an active transitive verb, denoting something to be done to the students by the university, and the word "character" is always used in the sense of a certain type of character of which the speaker approves, and not at all of the very numerous and various types of character which are latent in the freshmen (so far as they have not been destroyed by the "developing" process in the schools) and which might be allowed to unfold themselves in the years of

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university life. In fact, universities seem to be regarded by those who run them as a sort of heaven-sent opportunity for making over young men and young women into an approved pattern.

Universities are, of course, places in which a great deal of development of character does take place, in the proper sense of the word development. It has to, seeing that university students are almost all young persons between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five. There are other places in which an approximately equal development of character goes on, for the same reason—department stores, business offices, factories, military and naval establishments, art schools, nursing schools, race-tracks, theatrical companies—among the persons of corresponding age who happen to be occupied in those various employments. Human character insists on developing between seventeen and twenty-five ; nothing will stop it. It develops, in certain directions, even in jail. Of course it develops in universities. It does not follow that it is the business of the university to “develop” it. Universities have other functions. They were founded to teach truth and impart the capacity for pursuing and apprehending it—either the best obtainable truth, or the best truth compatible with Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism, or Fundamentalism, or some other limiting -ism duly set forth in the charter.

The best university is that which leaves the character of each student to develop itself along its own natural lines, with as little interference as possible from any university action, whether it be that of the principal, the faculty, the board of

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governors, or the collective student body. The sphere of the university is the mind. The business of the university is to impart knowledge and to teach the art of acquiring and using knowledge. If the university attends to this business properly, it is likely to find that a considerable benefit to the character usually results from knowledge and the power of using it ; but that is a by-product.

This universal passion for "developing character in" somebody else, and doing it through some collective agency such as the State, the university, the Rotary Club, the moving pictures, the censorship of the moving pictures, the books in the public library and the books kept out of the public library, the propagandist press, and the almost completely de-religionised pulpit, is surely the most typical, and most ludicrous, craze of the age. The only good thing about it is that it produces hardly any results—except a great deal of wasted effort. For the human adolescent soul has an uncanny instinct for detecting any such impersonal and collective efforts to "develop" it in the way in which (according to the developers) it ought to grow, and for reacting violently in the opposite direction. That which really influences the development of the adolescent soul is its contacts with other souls—free contacts with free individual souls, not persons delegated by the faculty of the board of governors to "develop" character. In the staff of any university there are almost sure to be a few powerful individuals, who will exert this real and personal influence (not on the whole student body, but on those who are accessible to it) in a natural and unofficial way, and thus do quite a lot of character-building. The best way to

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paralyse their influence is to put into the student mind the idea that the instructors are expected by the university authorities to devote themselves to developing character.

For even a university student wants to be himself. He wants to develop, true ; but he wants to develop on the lines of his own natural inclinations. He wants to retain his own colouring ; he does not go to Brown University to be turned Brown. And the type of character that a collective body like a university, or a public authority like a national school system, sets out to develop is necessarily a collective, neutral, uniform, regimented sort of type. Brown is its habit of mind, its most appropriate garb. Character-developers of this sort are hostile to strong individuality, to "sports," to peculiarities of all kinds. They want to make their students "conform" to a certain standard of behaviour, just as their predecessors, the educationists of a century ago, made them "conform" to a prescribed set of religious views. Of the two conformities, I should say that the latter was far less dangerous, though there was a time when it kept strong minds out of the universities as the present practice keeps out strong characters. But at neither period have students conformed half as much as educationists thought they ought to, which is a very good thing.

There has never been a time when students have come from the schools to the universities with their characters so little developed as to-day. This is so generally recognised that physiologists and psychologists alike have been hunting for explanations of it for years. Higher standards of living and lower standards of discipline in the home are frequently

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blamed. Is it altogether a coincidence that there has also never been a time when the secondary schools, acting as institutions, have been more profoundly and constantly concerned with the development of character? Note that I say "acting as institutions"; the strong individual schoolmaster or schoolmistress, exerting a purely personal influence on the pupils, was far more common fifty years ago than to-day; but the object of the school in those days was to teach knowledge, not to develop character. Now the school seeks to develop character in its pupils, not by putting them in contact with strong-charactered persons (for such persons cannot be induced to submit themselves to the relentless and mechanical routine of the modern school system), but by means of rules, and drills, and "character-building" lessons, and citizenship studies, and a watered-down ethical instruction, and an atmosphere which suggests that all little children should be as like one another as they can possibly be. All of which fails absolutely to produce either development or character.

Steel rails are best made by very large machines. Human characters are not. The only deliberate efforts to control and direct the development of adolescent character that are usually successful are those of parents and relatives in the home, and there is good biological reason for that. For such is the insoluble paradox of heredity and personality, that the child *is* the parents, continued on into a further generation, and the parents *are* the child, traced back historically to a preceding stage. Hence the perfectly natural effort of the parents to control and direct the character development of a new personality

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which is yet in a sense themselves ; and hence the readiness of the child to accept that direction until his own personality is well and vigorously established. The biological result is to maintain the supply of highly-individualised character-types, by ensuring that the parents shall largely control not only the physical heredity but also the early environment of the child, thus using both for the perpetuation of their own peculiarities. Philosophy has until very recently ignored the tremendous importance of this relation, and minimised the character-building services of the parents ; nine-tenths of our Utopias cheerfully hand the children over to the State as soon as they are weaned. Instinct, on the other hand, has always recognised it and clung to it with tenacity. It is strange that to-day, when philosophy for the first time begins to appreciate the post-natal services of the parents, instinct also for the first time seems to have weakened on that point. Parents to-day do not want to control the development of their children—or at least not enough to take the trouble to effect it. So they are allowing the State to do what philosophy has always said it should do and has only just discovered that it should not.

This can hardly last. Instincts are very permanent, and the laws of nature are even more so. A race which hands over its character-building function to agencies which cannot perform it will either soon see the error of its ways or somewhat later perish. But it is not likely that we shall have to perish from this particular cause. Parents will get back on their jobs eventually. Golf is a game, but fatherhood is one of the great natural desires of humanity, and includes much besides the act of procreation. The desire to

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extend one's personality beyond the limits of the individual life, by imparting as much as possible of oneself to members of the succeeding generation, is still quite widespread among men who are supposed to think about nothing except how to do a bigger business next year in shoes or razors or bonds. I believe the Big Brother movement is a species of substitution, an effort by men who have failed at being fathers to their own children, to perform the character-building function on somebody else's. As for the daughters who at the present moment have thrown their mothers out of their jobs by refusing to be mothered, they will in their due time be just as anxious to mother their own offspring as any other generation.

When we do thus get back to normal the family will be reconstituted as the chief factor in the "development" of character, and it will no longer be necessary for university and school authorities to say that that task is their own most serious problem. The schools can then go back to their proper business ; and there will be some chance of some real character being developed.



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